

Window on Jordan

Festivals galore, what about the audience

By Ilham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

CONTRARY TO what you may think it has not been a good season for Jordanian artists. There are festivals everywhere, but very few dinars have dropped into the pockets of local artists. Many of them say they will soon become extinct, if the situation is not improved.

Some artists blame the many festivals that take place during the summer. Quantity is not the issue here, they say, it is quality. The cities of Jerash, Fuheis, Salt, Azraq and Zarqa to name but a few have held their festivals recently, leaving the paying customer confused as to which one to [illegible] festivals. During the summer months, Jordan is visited by many tourists from abroad, and by many Gulf residents. Often, high price tickets are directed at non-Jordanian visitors, at the expense of Jordanian festival goers—who make up the vast majority of audiences.

The pricing policies are also influenced with the summer temperatures." He pointed out

One Jordanian father complained about the pricing policy. "Suddenly prices from tickets, transport, food, and drinks (including water) shoot up—the prices of festivals seemed to be linked

at the Jerash Festival, I dearly wanted to take my two children to see Marcel Khalifah, but after the initial cost, I only had two dinars left in my pocket."

Another outraged Jordanian claimed that, "the average man-in-the-street is outpriced at these festivals, which cater only to the well-off and foreign tourists."

Critics have since said that festivals are geared towards satisfying the needs of non-Jordanians who can afford high prices. But it isn't only ticket

Continued on page 2



The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

Le Jourdain
Supplément en français du Star

- Passeport pour la liberté des femmes — page 12
- S.A.S. à Amman, S.O.S. littéraire — page 13

Inside

- Back to school — page 2
- Reds — page 3
- Visit our books — page 6
- Olive Oil — page 9
- Art for art sake — page 10

AMMAN, 3—9 SEPTEMBER 1998, VOLUME 9, NUMBER 13, 350 FILS

اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Deputies view confidence vote with mixed reactions

By Ibtisam Awadat
Star Staff Writer

IN A step to stem the criticism made by Lower House deputies following the cabinet reshuffle, the government asked His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, to approve the extension of Parliament's extraordinary session which ended on August 22.

"People think the government's request for the extension is a maneuver to bring the legislative authority to its side, but it's not," said deputy Mahmood Kharabsheh, spokesman of the Lower House Legal Committee. "The constitution stipulates that the government present its ministerial statement within 30 days of its formation" explained Kharabsheh. Considering that the reshuffle took place while Parliament was in session, the government has to submit to a vote of confidence within that period.

It appears, however, measures taken so far by the government have not succeeded in pacifying lawmakers. "The vote of confidence is not a way to restore trust to our legislature which was completely ignored," said Bassam Haddadin, a former leftist deputy.

"What we have now is the domination of the executive authority, and that requires our legislature to activate its role and say its piece on the new cabinet and its policies," he added. Deputy Haddadin told *The Star* he would not give his vote to the government.

But some deputies are not so forthright. Deputy Khaleel Atteya for instance, and one who says it premature to judge the cabinet, expressed his dissatisfaction at what he called as double standards in ignoring the Lower House while appointing Senators to the government. He is inclined to deny the government his vote of confidence.

While agreeing that it's still early to determine whether or not to give a vote of confidence, opposition deputy Nazih Ammarin is disappointed.

"We waited for a national government, one that would bring together all the political trends in the country, but all we got is the same group that monopolizes the Kingdom's finances." However, Ammarin would not say as to the way he will vote. "I don't want any one to say that I took a stance just for the sake of "opposition", in addition, I need to consult my constituency."

Upon assuming its responsibilities, the new government's first declaration, referred to as statement number 1 by the press, was accepting the resignation of the Amman Mayor, Dr Mamdouh Al Abbadi. His resignation came as a shock to many Jordanians who saw a lot of constructive changes in the capital.

Journalists and media personalities, in particular, were stunned as he was known as their friend. Some newspapers, however, refereed indirectly to allegations of financial corruption totalling JD10 million that may involve Dr Abbadi.

Statement number 2 was to submit the contaminated water file to the General Prosecutor, a move that upset journalists who expected to receive a copy from the report of the investigation that was carried out by the independent committee headed by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Justice.

The government swiftly responded through Minister of Information Nasser Joudeh. In a press conference held last Tuesday week he clarified that the committee was not an "investigative" one, rather it was a fact finding mission. He added that after reviewing the report the government saw fit to forward it to the courts to determine who is at fault from a legal perspective."

Joudeh maintained that this is the transparency His Majesty King Hussein wants the cabinet to follow.

However, deputy Ammarin described this as a way to prevent the elected legislature from reviewing the content of the report. He pointed out that the internal rules of Parliament does not allow it to discuss a case that has been forwarded to the courts.

Rumors about the government's attempts to win over deputies to its side quickly spread after a meeting between Dr Tarawneh, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Minister of Justice, and deputies, especially those from the Wefaq Parliamentary Bloc that has 17 members.

Osama Malkawi, a member of the bloc said "I don't consider this meeting as an attempt to win us over, rather it was a venue to define our priorities and to handle different issues." Malkawi, who seemed optimistic, added "I think this cabinet has an advantage, the presence of Dr Tarawneh as a first time prime minister will deal with the affairs that affect this nation very pragmatically."■



Russian President Boris Yeltsin (left) looks on as he hugs his smiling US counterpart, Bill Clinton, before their talks at the Kremlin, 1 September. Yeltsin greeted Clinton with a bear-hug, Tuesday, at the start of a two-day summit that was overshadowed by discussions of Russia's worst crisis in years.

Reuters

National dialogue, a step in the right direction

By Ilham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

IT WOULD seem that the Kingdom is on the threshold of a new relationship between the Government and it's people. The old 'crisis of trust' is being replaced with a new attitude of confidence. The new Government is intent on bridging the gap that had widened following the mishandling of various affairs, like the growth rate fiasco, the continuing economic recession, and the contaminated water crisis.

The relationship is based on a greater credibility and transparency from the Government, and it seems that the country is soon about to reap the fruits of these new principles. Many political and economic leaders have applauded the recent initiative—launched by HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent—to meet the Muslim Brotherhood's leadership, in a bid to exchange views and open a dialogue. What makes this move so special, is that it came days after His Majesty the King issued the Letter of Designation to the newly formed Government. The Letter called for exactly this kind of initiative, and the indications are that more meetings are to follow.

"Our dialogue with HRH Prince Hassan opens a new chapter for all the political par-

Continued on page 2



Prince Hassan meets Professional Association Leader

Khartoum to probe ownership of factory targeted by US

By Mark Huband

SUDAN'S GOVERNMENT is to investigate the ownership of a pharmaceutical factory in the capital which was destroyed in a US missile attack on 20 August amid US allegations that chemical weapons were being manufactured on the site.

Sudan has denied US government claims that the Al Shifa factory is linked to Osama bin Laden, the Saudi Arabian dissident whose headquarters in Afghanistan was attacked at the same time as the Khartoum strike. Mr bin Laden, who has launched a violent campaign to force a US military withdrawal from Saudi Arabia, lived in Khartoum until the government asked him to leave in 1996.

Omar Hassan Al Bashir, Sudan's president, said he had formed a committee to establish the identity of the factory's owner. According to the Sudanese newspaper Al Jumhouria, the committee will be headed by a senior judge with the aim of investigating "the ownership of al-Shifa pharmaceutical factory, how it was set up and financed and how its ownership passed to the current owners."

The inquiry comes a week after President Al Bashir stated at a press conference that "Osama bin Laden has no shares in this factory". Sudanese officials have made it clear who they believe the owner to be, but remain keen to exploit the apparent paucity of US evidence to justify the attack by adopting a transparent approach towards the issue.

The government's inquiry follows what amounts to a refusal by the United Nations to send a fact-finding mission

Continued on page 2

Royals bolster image a year after Diana's Death



The bronze fountain memorial to Dodi Al Fayed (R) and Diana, Princess of Wales was unveiled by Harrods in central London August 31. The statue was unveiled a year to the day when Diana and Dodi were tragically killed in a high speed crash in Paris.

World REPORT

By Marjorie Miller

LONDON—First, the prince of Wales posed with the Spice Girls and Nelson Mandela during a trip to South Africa, looking so happy and relaxed that the Sunday Times called the once-dour king-in-waiting "Cheerful Charlie."

Then, on the eve of his 16th birthday, shy Prince William offered the world a peek into his private life with a few tidbits that portrayed him as an average teen-ager who enjoys techno music, action-adventure books and his black Labrador, Widgeon.

To top it off, this month Queen Elizabeth II stepped out of her palace and stopped by a McDonald's. She neither drove the Rolls-Royce nor tasted a Big Mac, but there was her majesty in a canary yellow suit and matching hat, white gloves and handbag, mixing it up with the folks outside a burger joint.

The crowd ate it up. So did the media.

In the year since Britain's beloved Princess Diana died in a Paris car crash and the house of Windsor came under attack for being so remote, the royals have been working overtime to improve their image and accessibility. While no one would call them the "people's monarchy," their labors are paying off.

For the first time in four years, a majority of Britons think Prince Charles would make a good king, according to a Guardian newspaper poll published this month. Similarly, 58 percent of those polled by the Sunday Times said they thought he is "fit to be king," and 63 percent said the country would be worse off if the monarchy was abolished.

This is a remarkable turnaround for the royal family, for whom Diana's death last Aug. 31 initially seemed to be as problematic as her rebellious life.

The members of the monarchy, which had lost stature during the acrimonious divorce of Charles and Diana, seemed coldly out of touch after she died when they withdrew behind the walls of their Scottish castle, Balmoral, to mourn in private while the rest of the country poured into the streets to grieve publicly.

The family did emerge a few days later to thank the millions of people who had left their flowers and tears on Diana's doorstep at Kensington Palace, and the queen went on national television to pay tribute to the princess.

But at Diana's funeral service in Westminster Abbey, Charles Spencer, her younger brother and the ninth Earl Spencer, implicitly rebuked the royal family for having stripped his sister of the title "her royal highness" after her 1996 divorce from Charles. His thinly veiled criticism of the family's stiff adherence to protocol—through his vow to protect Diana's two sons from a world of "duty and tradition"—drew applause from the throngs gathered outside.

The events left Britons craving a gentler monarchy to fill the void left by the "people's princess," as Prime Minister Tony Blair called her. It spurred demands that the cost and role of the monarchy be diminished, and even fueled a small republican movement to do away with it altogether.

Even before Diana's death, the royal family had taken modest steps toward modernization. The queen began paying taxes, and Buckingham Palace got a Web site. Prince Charles established a Way Ahead committee to chart the house of Windsor's path into the 21st century.

Under the tutelage of Blair, a master of public relations, the family has taken further measures to appear modern, conceding that princesses should have the same rights of succession to the throne as princes and making curtsying before the queen optional. Plans to renovate the royal yacht were scrapped. Buckingham Palace also has hired a new royal spin doctor, a 39-year-old public relations whiz credited with improving the fat-cat image of British Gas executives.

But much of his work is already done. The biggest improvement in the image of the royal family may be due more to the fact that it no longer has to compete—and contend—with Diana than to any PR campaign.

"There are no changes of substance whatsoever in the monarchy," said David Starkey, a constitutional historian at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge University. "There is no trace of

Continued on page 2

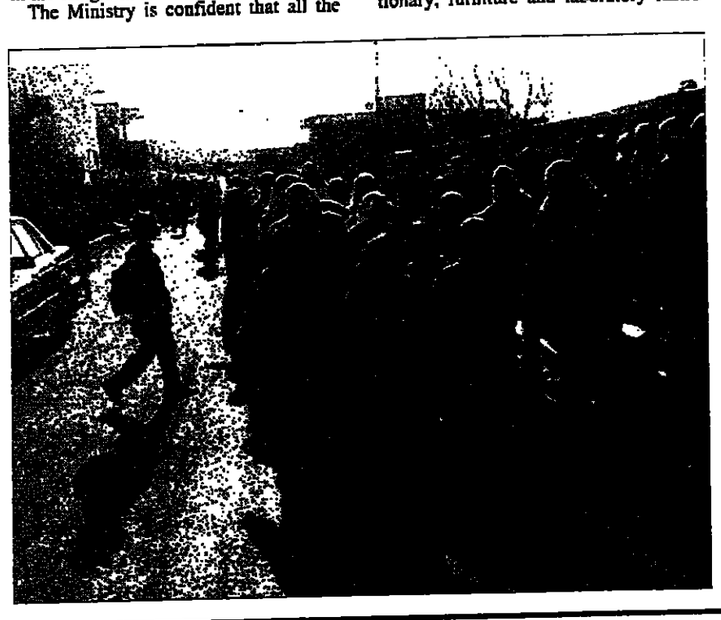
Back to school they go!

By Ibtisam Awadat
Star Staff Writer

Over one million Jordanian pupils went back to school last week, after the long Summer vacation finally came to an end. Officials in the Ministry of Education said that an extra 126,062 children would be experiencing the joys of schooling, as they join primary schools in the Kingdom for the first time.

The Ministry is confident that all the necessary preparations have been made to ensure that the new term gets under way smoothly. This includes maintenance work on almost 200 school buildings at a cost of JD 4.2 million.

Secretary General of the Ministry of Education Izzat Jaradat said "it is the Ministry's responsibility to ensure that at the beginning of every new term, the schools are supplied with all the necessary equipment. This includes books, stationary, furniture and laboratory instruments, for example." Mr Jaradat explained that it is also his Ministry's intention to provide all schools with the latest educational facilities, like equipping them the Internet for instance. "A lot of our schools (financed by the Government) already have computers installed and just need to be connected to the Net. The majority of private schools have this facility, and our schools should be no different," he continued.



The return to school is a big day for everyone. Parents have to go through the 'kitting out' process again, ensuring that their children are respectably dressed and prepared for the new term. "Even if their uniforms and bags are still in good condition, my children still force me to buy them new ones," a school teacher said, who was accompanying her children on a shopping expedition. "This has become a seasonal ritual, one I don't dare to interfere with," she said, highlighting the problem which more than a quarter of the Jordanian population (number of families with children at school) are currently going through.

"Most of my salary just disappears during this time," said Salem Arafat, a government employee. "I divide my salary into two halves, the first is spent on clothes and uniforms, whilst the second goes towards bags and shoes," said Arafat, the father of six children, all of school age. "I have a little boy at kindergarten, two girls at elementary school, two at high secondary school, and my eldest son is about to enter university. I guess the next five years are going to be miserable," he said with a rye smile on his face. The family earns a combined sum of JD 550 a month.



As is always the case, one person's misery is another's opportunity. Shop owners view the new term time with glee. "As we all know, the economic situation in the country is stagnant at the moment, so we welcome any new business," said Abu Majid, an owner of a clothes store in Amman. "I take advantage of this occasion to display as much of my school stock as possible," the salesman continued.

There were rumors that the "big day" was going to be postponed, because of the contaminated water crisis. However, the secretary general of the Water Authority, Munther Khlifat, made clear in recently that all schools had been supplied with suitable quantities of drinking water. In one, short statement, the hopes of the majority of Jordanian school children (for an extended Summer vacation) were washed away.■

For the Record

Rifa'i meets Arafat in Durban

DURBAN (Petra)—President of the Upper House of Parliament, and His Majesty King Hussein's representative at the Non-Aligned Movement's (NAM) Summit, Zaid Rifa'i, met Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on Tuesday to discuss issues of common interest. Mr Rifa'i assured President Arafat of Jordan's support for the Palestinian stand at the summit. The Palestinian President wants the NAM Summit to call on Israel to carry out all its obligations under the signed peace agreements, and to place the blame for the faltering peace process on the Hebrew state. Mr Rifa'i also met Syrian Vice-President Abdel Halim Khaddam, as well as the Iraqi Vice-President Taha Yassin Ramadhan, to review bilateral relations and to coordinate their positions on the various issues to be raised at the Summit. The President of the Senate further met the Pakistani Foreign Minister, and relayed a written letter from HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, to the Pakistani Prime Minister.

Sudanese Minister leaves Amman

AMMAN (Petra)—The Sudanese Minister of Culture and Information Ghazi Salah ed-Din left Amman early Tuesday morning after a short visit to Jordan, in which he met a number of high-ranking Jordanian officials. Dr Salah ed-Din said upon his arrival that his country would like to thank Jordan for their recent support. "These stands stem from His Majesty King Hussein's wisdom, long experience and relations on the international arena," he added. The Sudanese minister held talks with Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, Minister of Information Nasser Jeodeh, and the Ministry's Under-Secretary Ihsan Ramzi.

Regent Congratulates Vietnamese President

AMMAN (Petra)—HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, sent on Tuesday a cable of congratulations to the President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Tran Duc Luong on the occasion of his country's National Day. The Regent wished Mr Luong continued good health and happiness, and the Vietnamese people further progress and prosperity.

Srour Meeting

AMMAN (Petra)—Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Saad Hayel Srour on Tuesday received the French ambassador Bernard Bajolet, on the occasion of ending his mission in Jordan. The meeting focused on reviewing the development of relations between the two countries. Srour expressed appreciation for Mr Bajolet's efforts exerted to enhance the relationship between Jordan and France.

Information minister holds press meeting

AMMAN (Petra)—Information Minister Naser Judeh on Tuesday said that the government is determined to tackle the real problems facing the Jordanian people, through opening the channels of dialogue with the media and activating the decisions and procedures. He pointed out that solving the problems is possible, if efforts of all sectors of society are pooled together. In his meeting with local and foreign reporters, Judeh claimed that the meetings and dialogues with the political parties stem from a true desire to have the participation of all sectors in tackling the country's problems. Since its establishment in 1996, the Anti Corruption Department (ACD) uncovered 605 cases, bringing 323 individuals to justice, Judeh said. The ACD uncovered 131 cases in 1996, 304 cases in 1997 and 170 cases up until the end of June, in which 131, 141 and 64 individuals, respectively, were brought to justice. He affirmed that the ACD has made savings totaling JD 40 million. Concerning the Zai water station, the Minister confirmed that the government's statement to parliament is expected to be submitted before September 19th.

Festivals galore, but what about the audience

Continued from page 1

prices that have been criticized. Many local businesses seize this time of the year—from gift stores to suppliers of refreshments—and try to make as much profit as they can. Is this greed, or just good business sense? Whatever you think, it's always the local who has to suffer in the end.

And there is another side to this. Local artists are angered over a disproportionate distribution of the festival's revenues. Most of the criticism is directed towards the festival directors, who favor foreign artists over local ones.

Critics suggest that this is grossly unfair as many local artists have been neglected from this year's festival rounds. They suggest that local artists should be particularly encouraged since it is they who make up the nation's cultural character. It is also the local artists who represent the host country.

In the very near future festivals could well be devoid of local artists unless they are better rewarded financially. It may also be a wise move to concentrate on the quality of festivals, rather than on the quantity. Local artists claim it would be better to focus on two or three festivals over the summer period only, thereby guaranteeing the quality of the festival and the future of local art.■

Polish Minister praises Jordan

By Tala Abu Taha
Star Staff Writer

THE NEW Atlantic Conference saw a gathering of American and European politicians, academics and business people from the West. This year, the conference was convened in Amman. Poland was one of the countries attending, and was officially represented by Mr Radek Sikorski, undersecretary at the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"Poland is already treated as a part of the Atlantic Community, although it is not formally registered as member of NATO yet" Sikorski told *The Star*. He added that it was good that the venue was in this country because Jordan is a country that respects Atlantic values—those of freedom and respecting human rights.



Poland is looking forward to "having friends around the world"—with countries like Jordan—and the minister was impressed by the speech made by Crown Prince Hassan at the opening of the conference. He described it as "an impressive speech, showing Jordan has a wise leadership."

About the future economic relationship with Jordan he assured that "his country would like to make business, increase the economic exchange with Jordan, and to contribute more to the local tourist industry."

He added that tourism needs a stable environment in order to flourish, something which does exist fully in the area at the moment.

Regarding the Middle East peace process, he said that "Poland doesn't have a particular stand, but is a sympathetic observer. I think there is danger of relying too much on the outside. People here may have got used to the fact that solutions come from outside," Sikorki said.

This is the first visit for Mr Sokorski to Jordan.■

National dialogue, a step in the right direction

Continued from page 1

ties, but it will only bear fruit if it is accompanied by a strong will to succeed," said Jameel Abu Baker, the Brotherhood spokesman. The Muslim Brotherhood has already handed a memo to the Crown Prince. First on the list is the freezing of the Wadi Araba Treaty between Jordan and Israel, giving extra priority instead to inter-Arab relations. "We reject the Wadi Araba Treaty because our people are paying the price for it on a daily basis; we insist freezing ties with Israel," Abu Baker told *The Star*.

But why were the Muslims the first to be chosen? Observers say that it is because the Brotherhood is well respected, and is one of the largest political parties within the Kingdom. However, the spokesman was keen to see dialogue between all sectors of society.

Prominent political analyst, Dr Labeeb Qamhawi, shared this viewpoint. "Open dialogue is a step in the right direction. However, it should be a comprehensive dialogue—one that involves everyone—and it should become a regular event."

The latest meeting between the Crown Prince and members of the Council of Professional Associations (CPA) and the Federation of the Jordanian Labor Unions (FJLU) is considered to be another step in the right direction, underlining the importance of the relationship between the civic society in the state's institutions. "We are meeting here to reaffirm the need for active and responsible participation of all concerned parties to find solutions to all problems that are facing us," Prince Hassan said.

The reactions from the CPA leaders to the dialogue, were very optimistic. Mr Hassan Jaber, CPA's president, said that "the associations held open and frank talks with the Crown Prince, on both general and syndicate issues, and he (the Crown Prince) has promised to study and follow up on our proposals."

Mr Seif El Sharif, president of the Jordan Press Association (JPA), was present at the meeting, in which Prince Hassan stressed the importance of the role of professional associations—a basic pillar in society. This is a far cry from the previous Government's attitude, which attempted to minimize and marginalize the JPA's role.

The basic demands of the JPA were included in a file submitted to the Prince. "I have suggested that a Royal Amnesty be made to cancel all cases filed against newspapers, by both state institutions and the General Prosecutor. This could help create a new chapter in our relationship," Mr El Sharif added. Another suggestion from the JPA was to appeal for the Crown Prince to approve the idea of establishing a higher council for the press. The Prince promised to study the two proposals.■

Human resource development is the key

AMMAN (Petra)—Deputizing for His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Ibn Al Hussein patronized the opening ceremony of the 6th Jordanian Scientific Week on Tuesday, organized by the Higher Council of Science and Technology (HCST) in cooperation with the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) and the Jordanian Armed Forces. The theme for the week is "The Strategy of Developing Human Resources."

In remarks read out on behalf of Prince Hassan by Minister of Water and Irrigation, Energy and Mineral Resources Hani Mulqi, the Regent stressed the importance of human resource development. "Developing human elements wherever they are, requires the participation of all parties, and it is a national responsibility for all educational and labor sectors," the Regent said.

Prince Hassan said planning for human resource development should be made at two levels; one at the level of the concerned institutions (like the Education Ministry), and the other at the national level. "Jordan has accomplished a lot in the field of human resource development in general, and in the education sector in particular, but many of these accomplishments came in quantity rather than in quality," the Regent said. Focus should be put on qualitative aspects and dimensions.

The educational development plan—which is about to be completed—should aim at defining points of weakness, as well as strength. "Building a national economy capable of competing and adapting with the local, regional and international changes requires from us to concentrate, in our economic policies, on the continuous institutional interaction between the governmental, educational, training and research sectors," the Regent said.

The Regent underlined the need for a data base and a modern information system that would provide a clear picture about the labor market's needs, job opportunities, foreign labor and unemployment. Referring to the acute problem of unemployment, the Regent said "our society is suffering from a 15% unemployment rate."

He noted that the educational system can play a significant role in easing the pressure of the problem. "How can it be that Jordan hosts over 300,000 foreign workers—with less than one third having work permits—at a time when there are 200,000 unemployed Jordanians," the Regent questioned.■

Royals bolster image a year after Diana's death

Continued from page 1

'Dianafication,' because Diana was Diana. You really can't imagine the queen having a good boo-hoo with an AIDS victim.

"What has happened, really, is that Diana is dead and the problem for the monarchy was Diana alive," Starkey said. "They were constantly being judged against her."

Most of all Charles, who so often looked sullen and miserable throughout the couple's public quarrel. The fuddy-duddy next to the star.

Now Charles looks as if he has been released from a straitjacket. He smiles more often and more naturally and seems a gentler figure as a single father looking out for the young princes who lost their mother.

In recent months, Charles' relationship with Camilla Parker-Bowles, whom Diana had accused of crowding her marriage, also has been brought more into the open.

The British media, which agreed to keep its distance from Diana's sons after her death, reported a chance meeting between Prince William and Parker-Bowles in June. William had traveled to London from his boarding school to go to the movies with friends and made an unscheduled stop to change clothes at his father's place, St. James' Palace. Parker-Bowles was there.

According to the British media, Charles gave his son the choice of greeting her or not and William opted to say hello. The two engaged in light conversation for half an hour over soft drinks.

The fact that this story leaked out and was confirmed by official spokesmen led to speculation that it was part of an effort to gain public acceptance of Parker-Bowles, who subsequently attended a 50th birthday party that the young princes threw for Charles.

This too seems to be having its effect. The media has been publishing more flattering pictures of the royal mistress. Asked recently by the Guardian if Charles should marry Parker-Bowles, 35 percent of respondents said yes compared with 30 percent last October; 46 percent were against marriage, compared with 55 percent in October.

While Charles has seen his popularity rise sharply in the last year, it still lags behind the queen's. Of those polled by the Sunday Times, 62 percent said she should never abdicate. In another poll, published Thursday, 73 percent said they are satisfied with the job the queen is doing.

It was unclear whether that satisfaction has come despite or because of the queen's efforts to be more accessible. She has let it be known that she communicates with the young princes by e-mail, rather than quill pen, has invited rock stars to Buckingham Palace and made her now-famous stroll among the McDonald's crowd.

"I mean, what a place to choose," sniffed Starkey, the historian. "I've never been to McDonald's. It's just a question of taste."■

Khartoum to probe ownership of factory targeted by US

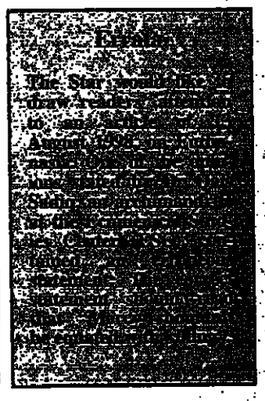
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to Sudan to establish the truth about the factory's role. The US has been widely criticised for offering unconvincing evidence that the factory produced precursors for VX nerve gas. Soil samples the US says were taken from the site before the attack are of uncertain quality as proof, independent scientists have concluded.

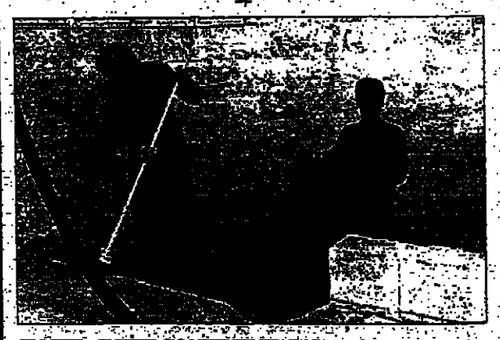
Determined to further dent US credibility, a Sudanese delegation defied UN sanctions on Libya when it flew on a Sudan Airways flight direct to Tripoli at the invitation of Muammar Gadaffi, the Libyan leader.

The flight took place as Taha Yassin Ramadan, Iraq's vice president, visited the bombed factory.■

Financial Times



Let's keep it clean



HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL'S environment committee organized the second clean up in the area around the Hotel. Management and staff members participated in the clean up.

As part of the Hotel's commitment to keep this beautiful country clean, and to keep the staff informed and aware of the environmental issues and methods of protecting the environment, a clean up spree will take place more frequently and environmental training classes will be held for the staff.■

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JORDAN WEEK



An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Marwan Al Asmar

Press

■ The draft Press and Publication Law has been passed into law, Monday, after it was given the Royal seal of approval. Daily and weekly newspapers have now 90 days to readjust themselves in accordance with the new law. One of the issues of contention is that of finance, something that will affect weekly newspapers more than the dailies. The paid up capital of weeklies is now raised from JD 15,000 to JD 100,000. In addition, a chief editor must have worked in the journalism profession for at least eight years, and must be a member of the Jordan Press Association for at least three years.

Strikes

■ Workers at the Tobacco and Cigarettes Company staged a strike this week because they didn't receive their wages for last month. However, the demonstration was soon called off after the intervention of the Deputy President of the Trade Union Federation, Fatahallah Al Umrani, who promised that he would solve the matter. But the funny thing was that the workers went on strike the next day. This time it was because the Electricity Company cut off the power supply as a result of outstanding dues. Meanwhile students from the University of Jordan staged a demonstration, Monday, outside the Prime Ministry. They called for the release of the UJ Student Council leader Al Hareth Fakhri, and Khalid Snobar. They were both taken into custody last Wednesday, when they delivered a speech supporting Sudan. The students have subsequently been released.

Hard labor

■ The State Security Court sentenced Imad Ibrahim to seven years hard labor and fined him JD 5000. He was found guilty of drug pushing. The details of the case were made clear to the court—the accused was caught selling 4.5 kilos of hashish at JD 800 per kilo. The arrests were made during the transaction.

Doctors

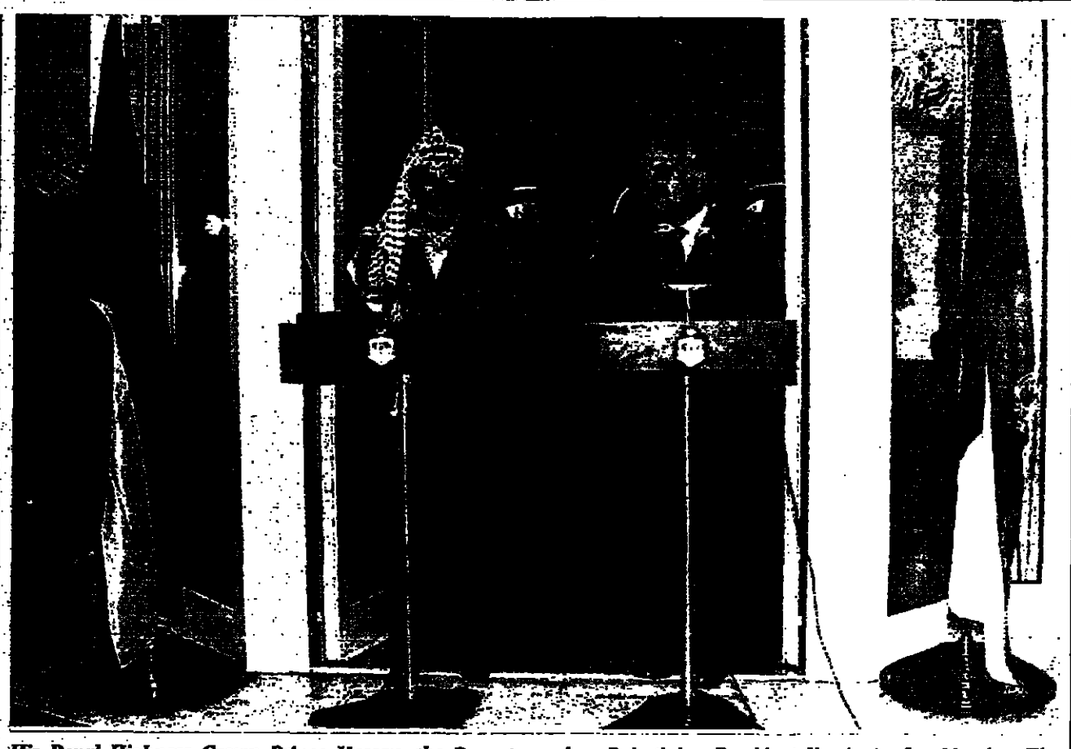
■ One would have thought that doctors are rich enough not to get themselves in a mess. Not so! Jordan's Medical Association (JMA) have cancelled the membership of 210 doctors. This is because these doctors have failed to pay their dues. JMA President Dr Bassam Al Dajani said that the Association had taken this action because the dues of these members were piling up over the last three years.

Water

■ The Zai Water Treatment Plant will start pumping water at full capacity again by the end of this week. *Western I can start enjoying themselves again! From* now on, they can expect to get tap water on a twice-weekly basis—the normal summer rate. We are told that ministers and officials are working day and night to make sure that the water we get won't be subject to contamination again.

Writers

■ Last week five members from the executive committee of the Jordan Writers Union submitted their resignations. They are Mustapha Khrisat, Dr Ranad Al Khateeb, Dr Mahmood Al Sirhan, Akram Abu Al Ragheb, Ahmed Gaber, Khaled Obidat, and Nadia Al Ghalool. Their resignation comes as a protest against JWU chief Hani Kheir whom they accuse of individualism. They added that Kheir publishes congratulatory advertisements and condolences without consulting them. A storm in a tea cup! Maybe. But the issue is still going on.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, receives Palestinian President Yassir Arafat, Monday. The Prince underlined Jordan's support for the Palestinian people and its determination to kick-start the peace process.

The 'comrades' battle moves into higher gear

By Ilham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer





Zayadin (left) and Hamarneh promise to fight it out, come what may

THE CURRENT dispute inside the Jordanian Communist Party (JCP) has led some people to believe that a permanent split is inevitable. If the internal conflict continues at its present rate, the movement itself could be in danger, analysts warn.

The JCP's difficulties began to surface soon after the election of Dr Munir Hamarneh, the current secretary general of the JCP. In a nutshell, Dr Hamarneh has been accused by the party's former secretary general, Yacoub Zayadin, of receiving external finances—contrary to party law—which is threatening the image of the party.

The Star interviewed the two leading figures, in a bid to explore means of settling the dispute in a peaceful manner. "The real difference of opinion started when Zayadin refused to accept the results of the JCP's 2nd Conference, held at the end of 1997, when a new leadership and a new central committee were elected," said Dr Hamarneh. Since then, Zayadin has tried his best to change the results of the conference, calling for the dismissal of five members from the central committee. Zayadin maintains that the committee is unbalanced and favors Dr Hamarneh.

In a series of astonishing events, Zayadin called for an extraordinary meeting to hold new elections, but when asked if he thought the previous elections were improper, he replied that they were not. When his demand was refused, Zayadin threatened to destroy the JCP, despite many reconciliation attempts from friends inside and outside the party.

Dr. Hamarneh told *The Star*, "Zayadin then started to speak to the press, accusing the present leadership of dealing with the CIA." During an internal party meeting, Zayadin denied, then reversed the accusation, and a three-man investigation committee was formed (Zayadin was able to name two members) to resolve all the issues. "The results of the committee's investigations showed that the party never received any finances from an external source. Yet Zayadin continues to make the same accusation," Dr Hamarneh said. In the latest round of events, Zayadin recently confiscated JD 30,000 of party funds, and deposited them in his personal account. Dr Hamarneh insists that, "by law, this sum should be returned to the party immediately."

It should be mentioned here that the JCP has a long history of dealing with non-governmental institutions affiliated to the European Union and the United Nations, even when Zayadin was secretary general. All the deals have been legitimate and are aimed at providing financial assistance for families in need of help. Zayadin himself has supervised a lot of similar sponsored activities.

"The truth is that Zayadin has been exaggerating, and is making a fuss because he was not elected as general secretary. There is no political or ideological difference between Hamarneh and Zayadin, just the post of the secretary general," said a member in the JCP, who preferred to remain anonymous.

"We are the mother communist party and I assure you that we have documents that prove their is involvement with outside financiers," Zayadin said in his defense, "and according to Article No. 19 of the JCP Law, it is prohibited to deal with external parties or get finance from them. We have the evidence that the present leadership of the party is violating this law."

Can the Ministry of Interior help? It seems not, as the Interior Minister, Nayef Al Qadi, told *Ad Dustour* recently that "the Ministry of Interior would not intervene in an internal party dispute. Such issues are in the hands of the court, which is solely authorized to settle such disputes."

Meanwhile, the two sides continue to exchange allegations. Hamarneh and Zayadin are both insisting that the other is in the wrong, and both are threatening to take each other to court. ■

Jordanians say their word about new cabinet

AMMAN (Star)—Press and public opinion monitoring centers were busy this week with the newly formed government under the leadership of Dr Fayez Al Tarawneh. The cabinet, appointed on 20 August, contained 12 ministers from the previous government giving the impression that nothing has changed.

The new cabinet, its formation, and its ability to deal with different responsibilities were issues tackled by the Strategic Studies Center in a recent survey.

The survey sample was divided into a national one that contained average citizens above the age of 19 (938 individuals); and public opinion leaders (581 individuals) which comprised leaders of political parties, former ministers, journalists and columnists, academics and others.

The results show the national sample as more optimistic than opinion leaders that the new cabinet will carry out its coming responsibilities with high efficiency (25.4% compared to 19.3%). However, only 39.1% of the national sample believe the new cabinet will carry out its coming responsibilities with a less degree of efficiency compared to 47.8% of public opinion leaders.

Referring to the Prime Minister's ability to succeed in assuming the tasks of his new position, 33.8% of the national sample and 25.5% of public opinion leaders answered that Dr Tarawneh will highly succeed. About 39.8% of the national sample and 44.6% of public opinion leaders, however, thought he will succeed at a less degree.

In response to a question about the new reshuffle, 26% of the national sample and 15.5% of public opinion leaders thought it was successful. About 18.4% of public opinion leaders, however, thought it was not successful, claiming nothing has changed and that the members of the new cabinet are not the right persons to tackle the crises that face the government.

Regarding the economy and unemployment, 26.9% of the national sample and 63.7% of public opinion leaders believe the new government will not be able to improve the current economic situation, and 43.5% of the national sample and 77.1% of public opinion leaders believe the new cabinet is incapable of solving the unemployment dilemma.

In an answer on its ability to deal with poverty, 51.3% of the national sample and 80.4% of public opinion leaders said the new government will not be able to do so.

On the matters of improving relations with Arab countries, supporting the Palestinians in the peace process, deepening the democratic process, and reinforcing national unity, a majority from both samples agree the new government's efforts will be met with success. ■

PORTRAIT



A man of economics

HE IS being dubbed as the new economic whizz kid. His appointment as Minister for Economic Development is likely to prove a very important innovation as Dr Taher Kanaan has long been respected as an international economist.

Born in Nablus in 1935, he began his studies in his home town, and graduated from Al Najah National College. In this respect, he joins a distinguished list of Palestinian political leaders. Later on, Kanaan continued his studies in the United Kingdom, where he received a doctorate in Economic Sciences.

Since then, his life has become dominated by economics. After his studies for instance, he worked as an economic consultant in Iraq and in Morocco. But his career took off in the 1970s when he first served as an advisor to the United Nations for Trade and Development in New York, and appointed Chief of the External Fund Department from 1979 to 1982.

During his work Dr Kanaan was never far from serving the greater Arab interest. Between 1973 to 1976, he became a director of the Programs Department at the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development. Between 1983 to 1985, he joined the Arab Fund again as a consultant and a director of the Computer Center.

After 20 years of working abroad, Dr Kanaan finally returned to Amman in April 1985. Zeid Al Rifai, the Prime Minister at the time gave him the portfolio of the Occupied Territories. This ministry was later canceled, following Jordan's legal and political disengagement from the West Bank.

When Rifa'i reshuffled his cabinet in 1986, Kanaan headed the Planning Ministry. He stayed in office till 1989 riding out all the economic difficulties that the economy was going through. Since then, and until 1997, he served in the private sector.

In 1997, he was nominated as a Senator, taking his seat in the Upper House of Parliament.

The return to political office was completed two weeks ago, when Dr Kanaan was given the portfolio at the Ministry of State for Development Affairs, heading the new Government's economic team. ■

Press Cocktail

Separation

☛ In his column in *Ad Dastour*, George Haddad urged the government to continue its efforts to separate the constitutional powers to preserve the "parliamentary functioning spirit"—a response to the call made by His Majesty King Hussein. Mr Haddad states that such functioning has been weakened recently by the adoption of the 1998 draft Press and Publication Law, which was carried through by the previous government. It passed through the Lower House by only 38 votes. "So, in order to give Parliament its due credit, the separation of powers must be maintained," Mr Haddad emphasizes. "This is also in order to stop the game of promises made by the government to the deputies, in return for their confidence votes. We should all support the cabinet in its efforts to propose the required legislative amendments to insure the segregation of powers," Mr Haddad continued, contrary to those who wish to stick to the status quo for their own benefits.

University seats

☛ The trepidation of the Tawjhi exams filtered down when admission lists to public universities were announced this week. Gloomy faces dominated the scene, because their names where nowhere to be found despite the fact that many obtained more than acceptable grades to enter a public university.

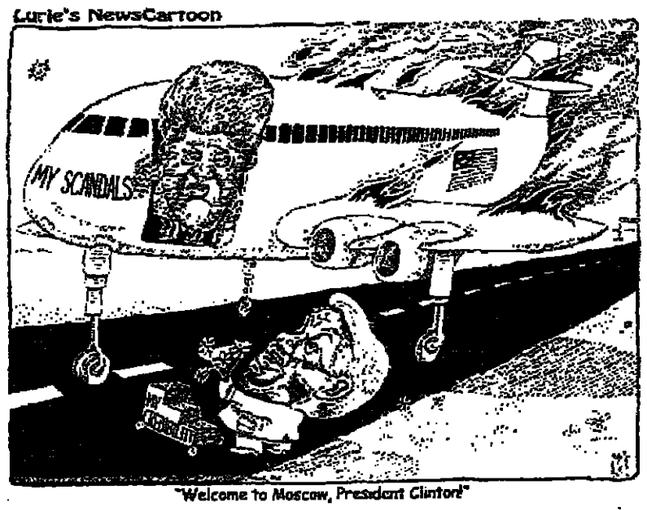
Fakhari Qawar, a well-known columnist in *Al Rai*, echoed the voice of the many when he said that the state must find a solution to those students who make the grades, but can't get into universities. He says the problem gets worse every year because of the natural increase in student numbers. However, he puts the onus on the government saying that the matter is simple. "These students must be found seats in public universities. It's no use turning a blind eye, and saying that they have the option of going to private universities," he points out. He says, and quite rightly, "that not everybody can afford a private university education, and therefore most of these students face a bleak future." Finding a job, sitting at home or very probably joining the ranks of the unemployed becomes very real and serves as a breeding ground for deviancy and crime. Mr Qawar pointed out that "what is needed is a long-term policy that takes into account the yearly increase of the student population."

Israel's Defence Minister in China

☛ Saleh Zaytoun talked in *Al Aswaq* financial daily about the recent visit to China made by the Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai. At the heart of his column was the military cooperation between China and Israel. Mr Zaytoun outlined the expected consequences of this visit on Arab-Chinese relations, at a time when Israel faces worldwide isolation because of its procrastination in implementing the peace treaty with the Palestinians. The writer saw the visit as a major step, a historical precedent, and indeed, a driving wedge in the Chinese Mammoth, who right from the start, was vigilant about Israeli intentions in the Far East. It was only this year, the writer said, that Israeli-Chinese relations developed rapidly as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made a visit to Beijing earlier this summer. He called on Arab officials to strike back and save their interests with their Chinese counterparts by reminding them of the values of Mao-tse Tong and Shun Lai.

The Star
Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly
OnLine
http://star.arabia.com





"Welcome to Moscow, President Clinton!"

Our Say. . .

The irony of the Moscow summit

THE MOSCOW summit this week between US President Bill Clinton and Russia's President Yeltsin should offer the two beleaguered leaders a precious moment of contemplation.

Clinton needs to be away from Washington to rethink his strategy as his opponents at home gain on him. with accusations of impeachable offences in connection with the Monica Lewinsky scandal. For Yeltsin. his woes are far from personal. The country has moved from a series of economic mini-crises into a major one that today threatens to undo years of so-called reforms along the market economy approach.

Russia's deep woes are more important to the world right now. The country owes billions of dollars to the West. It has already asked for debt rescheduling and as a result its rouble slid into a free fall, vaporizing people's savings in the process and fermenting a political standoff between Yeltsin and the communist-led State Duma.

While Russia's economy is no bigger than that of Holland, the Russian state, although humbled by the collapse of the Soviet empire and the Eastern Bloc alliance. remains an important player on the political stage. The country still holds a large stockpile of nuclear weapons that can only be kept under control if its government and economy remain stable.

The United States has sought to help Russia's fledgling economy and reforms because it has an immediate interest in working with the Russian leadership on mutual reduction of nuclear missile inventories. A weakened Yeltsin and a resurgence of communist elements in the former Soviet empire could put the arms reduction process in jeopardy.

On the other hand. Clinton's personal problems could soon turn into a political crisis at home. As Congress awaits the submission of the report of the special prosecutor. Clinton is trying to deflect the nation's attention from the Monica scandal in the hope of saving his tarnished presidency. Doing something for Russia could certainly help boost Clinton's chances of limiting the damage of the sex scandal.

A much-tempered Yeltsin needs America's help now. His choice of premier has already been bungled by a defiant Duma. As his prime minister-designate, Viktor Chernomyrdin, makes another attempt to get the Duma's approval of his appointment. the political and economic crisis is widening. Russia will remain a big question mark in the coming days and weeks.

It is not clear if the two leaders will benefit much from each other. Russia needs more money in order to offset the damage of the last few weeks. Clinton may not be able to offer more than lip service and advice. As things stand the two leaders need each other but are not in a position to help each other much. That's the irony of the situation.■



A woman dressed in typical Bahia state kisses leader Fidel Castro after she tied a lace on Castro's wrist during the welcoming ceremony at the Salvador Airport, Bahia, in north-eastern Brazil. Castro stopped in Brazil for a one-day private visit on 31 August, en route for South Africa where he is attending a summit of the Non-Aligned movement in Durban, which ends today 3 September .

The Star
Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

An independent political, economic and cultural weekly, published every Thursday in Amman by Jordan Press & Publishing Co. (Ad-Dustour).
Editorial & Advertising: Telephones 5664153 Fax 5667170
P.O. Box 591 Postal Code 11118 Amman - Jordan. e-mail: Star@arabia.com
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Oh, what a lovely war!

By Gore Vidal



From the archives: It is evident that scenes like the one above will continue to haunt the American self-conscience

FORTY PERCENT of the American people assembled in the Mall recently, decided that the strikes against the Islamic Satans in the Sudan and Afghanistan were intended only to divert attention from their Commander-in-Chief. Such figures were enough to make a patriot weep.

How can a once indispensable nation turn so rapidly into an apparently, indisposable global empire and world policeman? What has gone wrong? Why are they blowing up our embassies? Who are they? Or as a lady asked me at a political meeting *in Orange County, California, during* the Cold War: "I have two questions. Firstly, what can I do as an average American housewife to fight Communism, and secondly, what is Communism?"

No president can do much, domestically. The economy takes care of itself. Nixon once observed. And besides, he added, it's pretty dull. That leaves the President for foreign affairs. Trips abroad. Pageantry. Nixon *himself had a vastation equal to that* of Henry James in the Galerie d'Apollon of the Louvre when he first marched past the gorgeous royal guard of the king of the Belgians. Reeling at the glory of it all, he ordered *Ruritanian uniforms for the* White House security men, uniforms that to this day dress many a far flung production of 'The Merry Widow.' But pageantry to one side. there are the pleasures of showing that the *empire is no poor helpless (brain-*dead) giant. Stand tall. Light the missiles. Bang! People always rally round the President when he's telling foreigners what's the Palmerston manoeuvre.

No one can count the number of covert and overt wars that the United States has fought since 1945. Governments overthrown in Guatemala and Iran. Then bloody "police action" in Korea. A dozen years of containing China by trying to destroy its millennial enemy. Indochina. The destruction, in the process, of Cambodia and Laos.

Then war on the cheap. Reagan invades the island of Grenada, forgetting to tell it's Queen, your Queen, in the process. Reagan also dropped bombs on Gadaffi in Libya. Bush had his light show in the Gulf. Defied by the great Satan Noriega, for whose capture we invaded fearsome Panama. we kidnapped Noriega, put him on trial in a Miami court that had no jurisdiction over him, then put him in jail for crimes that make no sense. What is this all about? For one thing, constant stream of "enemies" is the only justification for a half-century of *military procurement; $5.5 trillion* thus far. When Communism folded, two new wars were launched. First, against drugs, an unwinnable but highly enjoyable and profitable enterprise for the prosecutors, and even *the victims of our paranoia.*

Then there was the war against terrorism. What is a terrorist? Well, anyone who objects. say, to our support for Israel. To dramatize these enemies we put snarling faces on them. Enemy of the Month Club. Arafat for a long time. Gadaffi, whose eyeliner still offends American manhood. Nasser. who died. Noriega, who got kidnapped. Saddam, who got away, if not with Kuwait, with his defiance. Now Osama bin Laden, Saudi in Afghanistan.

The CIA's demonizing process is fascinating, swift, unvarying. Each demon admires Hitler. Keeps a copy of 'Mein Kampf' beside his bed. Is a poofter; red silk knickers are found *in his closet.* He also has *mistresses* and takes cocaine. In Noriega's case the captured cocaine paste turned out to be tortilla flour. Can't win them all, as they say at Langley, Virginia. The fact that there are more than a *billion Muslims in the world, as op*posed to a quarter of a billion Americans (by no means united in this enterprise), gives no one pause. Twin devils: drugs and Islamic terror fuelled by an insane fundamentalism—who can forget Olivier as the Mahdi?

It was irresistible for Clinton to push the revenge button against those responsible for the embassy bombings. Unfortunately, we don't actually know who they were. Sandy Berger looked definitely shifty at the National Security Council press conference. Madeleine Albright, due to some configuration of her handsome lips, seems always to be extruding snakes, toads and scorpions. It appears that a guess was made. Action was taken. Allies? Forget it. Boris! We stand alone, and we stand tall.

There is something else to think about as well. Should something unfortunate explode on American soil, *under the Constitution, the President* assumes wartime powers and is beyond the reach of all law and custom—as Lincoln discovered when he invoked the sombre constitutional phrase "military necessity"; which allowed him to cancel *habeas corpus*; shut down newspapers and free the slaves. Oh, what a lovely thing is war. More to the point, as the eloquent Spiro Agnew once said: "The United States, for all its faults, is still the greatest nation in the country." ■

The writer is a famous American novelist writer, well-known for his wit and cynicism.

The Guardian

Alarm bells should be ringing

By Joan Smith

WHEN the Gulf War started in January 1991. 91 Iraqis and Palestinians were arrested and threatened with deportation from this country (Britain) on the grounds that their presence was "not conducive to the public good." They were not, however. individuals funded by the Iraqi government; on the contrary, *many were dissidents* passionately opposed to Saddam Hussein.

So why were they rounded up? The answer lies in an infamous list. drawn up by MI5 and Special Branch. which purported to name suspected "terrorists" of Middle Eastern extraction.

Among those detained was the Palestinian writer and academic Abbas Shiblak, who had lived in Britain for many years and was well-known—to everyone but the police and the Security Services—as a moderate. Mr Shiblak was freed after two weeks of internment, followed a week later by an Iraqi student who managed to persuade officials they had got the wrong man. Displaying the traditional English dyslexia about foreign names, the Security Services had mixed him up with someone else—someone who was probably as innocent as the rest of the unfortunates.

This was confirmed in March 1991 when the then British Home Secretary, Kenneth Baker. announced there would be no deportations and no trials as a result of the round-up. Indeed, Mr Baker was said to have been shocked by the flimsy. anecdotal evidence used to compile the list and later ordered an inquiry into what many observers regarded as a scandalous abuse of human rights. The Home Office recognised that some of the Iraqi students whom MI5 and Special Branch had fingered were genuine refugees.

What this demonstrates is that, when it comes to identifying terrorists in this country, relying on "intelligence" gathered by MI5 and Special Branch is about as effective as picking foreign-sounding names from the telephone directory. (Irish accents are similarly popular with the police, as the Birmingham Six discovered.) Nor that the Security Services learnt much from their dismal performance in 1991. In February this year, when air strikes against Iraq once again looked imminent, they were apparently ready with another list of potential detainees—until the Government squashed the idea.

In the wake of the Omagh bombing, and the terrorist attacks on the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, all this is in danger of being forgotten. Last week, in an emotional speech in Northern Ireland, Tony Blair announced a package of anti-terrorist measures the centrepiece of which is the relaxation of the rules of evidence in the province. Once the new law is rushed through Parliament it will be possible to convict suspects of belonging to a proscribed organisation solely on the word of a senior police officer. This is not strictly internment but it carries the same risks, of honest mistakes and malicious identifications, which are credited with having recruited so many new members to the IRA in the 1970s.

The law is aimed at the Real IRA, but there is nothing to stop it being used against members of other political organisations in future. Panic measures, hurried on to the statute books in a matter of days, remain in force for decades, available to governments of a quite different stripe from the one that originally proposed them. As a separate part of the same package, *it will become an offence* to conspire to commit criminal offences abroad, a measure which Liberty described last week as "a serious threat to human rights."

Conspiracy trials rarely turn on hard evidence, for the simple reason that people who intend to commit criminal acts infrequently document their intentions on paper. Convictions *tend to depend on circum*stantial evidence, such as membership of political organisations—not quite the same as being put on trial for your politics, but it comes close. *It will* even be an offence, according to some reports, to collect funds for a terrorist organisation abroad—and who is to define "terrorist" in this context, other than our old friends the Security Services and Special Branch?

I know it's the end of August, that many MPs are still on holiday and that newspapers are full of the anniversary of the death of the Princess of Wales. But I'm astonished by the muted response to Mr Blair's announcement of such undemocratic and ineffectual measures—ineffectual because they do not address the causes of terrorism, only its results. They are also likely to convert moderates, Irish Republicans and Islamists alike, into vengeful extremists. Mr Blair appeared close to tears when he visited Omagh. You do not have to doubt his sincerity to suggest that he has made a serious error of judgement. But this country's record of imprisoning the wrong people is bad enough, without making it worse in the heated atmosphere that follows terrorist atrocities like Omagh.■

Independent On Sunday



Angolan soldiers stand guard at the Matadi airport 30 August. The strategic port city of Matadi has been retaken by Congolese forces with the help of the Angolan army.

Business scene

■ Under the auspices of HRH Prince Faisal Bin Al Hussein, the sixth Jordanian Industrial Products Expo will open next Monday at the Amman International Automobile Show, situated on the airport road.

About 90 Jordanian companies, representing the industrial sector, are taking part in the Expo organized annually by Expo Jordan Company. This year the venue has a special significance, for it coincides with the meetings of the first Conference of Jordanian Investors and Businessmen scheduled to convene between 7 till 11 September.

■ Parties interested and specialized in computer systems pointed out that Jordan's losses from the Year 2000 Bug could reach as high as $20 million, if the public and private sector fail to find a solution to combat this problem. In light of this fact, Jordan will next month host the Middle East Strategic Conference, aimed at discussing the Year 2000 problem (Y2K). Jordanian, Arab and international experts will be participating, and the conference's aim is to make people aware of the problem, to evaluate it, and come up with suggestions and solutions to the crisis.

■ Official statistics by the Central Bank showed that credit facilities given from banks to various economic sectors during the first half of this year was JD 4.184 billion. This figure compares with JD 3.979 billion granted by the end of last year, showing a rise of JD 204.5 million in only six months. The trade sector received JD 86.6 million and JD 589.9 million went to the industrial sector.

■ In a step to restore the deadlocked economic cooperation between Jordan and Kuwait since the Gulf War in 1990, the first joint Jordanian-Kuwaiti expo will be organized between September 26 to October 3 at the Amman International Car Show. About 800 Jordanian and Kuwaiti industrial companies are scheduled to take part in the event.

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 2 September

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US $	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.1510	1.1568
DM	0.4124	0.4145
SFr	0.4801	0.4825
FRF	0.1227	0.1233
YEN (100)	0.5624	0.5652
DEL	0.3667	0.3685
LIT (100)	0.0419	0.0421

Insurance companies warn from losses caused by arson fires

By Ilham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

THE INCREASE of arson accidents damaging commercial properties is causing a big financial lose to insurance companies in Jordan. However, measures must be take to deter people from carrying out or think of carrying out such attacks.

The insurance sector in 1997 alone paid out about JD 5.6 million for fire accidents. Experts say that claims make up nearly 50 percent of the total fire insurance premiums, which was estimated at JD 11.1 million last year.

Today, fire incidents and car accidents are causing much insurance frand. Some drivers even take advantage of insurance claims to pay for earlier damages to their vehicles.

Mr Raouf Abu Jaber, president of the Jordanian Federation of Insurance Companies, stated, "Insurance companies suffer from many problems. These particularly arise when investigation reports concludes that fire accidents were caused deliberately. People also aren't that cooperative in giving accurate information."

Problems also arise when policyholders have no intention to cooperate, which creates further disputes with the insurance company.

"Insurance companies are willing to settle any dispute in fire cases if they believe it to be accidental or unintentional" he said. Mr Abu Jaber added that the insurance policy is basically meant to provide such coverage. Nevertheless, if the insurance company doubts the credibility of casualty reports, it will carry out further investigations calling for a grace period before setting the case.

"I hope that all concerned parties would find a way out of this dilemma, and handle such controversial issues more accurately," he continued.

Manipulating the law is becoming another threatening issue. Mr Tayseer Mishael, deputy general manager of the United Insurance Co. says that "Arson forms about 70 percent of fire accidents, which remains unsolved. They are then classified as anonymous cases."

The usual procedure in dealing with such casualties, is that the surveyor appointed is authorized to visit the place to make sure that the fire isn't deliberate. After that he hands the report to the company. Ironically enough, the court doesn't take these report into consideration. It only takes the report of Civil Defense officials as formal evidence. Based on these facts, the court reaches a verdict.

Mr Mishal maintained that investigations into arson attacks should take into account many important aspects, like the existence of flammable items or the scope of the fire.

An owner of a supermarket which has recently been damaged by fire admits that many clients take insurance policies as an excuse for indemnity, caring less about moral codes" In the absence of conscience you can expect anything" he says.

Mr Mishal urged the need to appoint specialized committees from the government to follow up on the issue in cooperation with the insurance companies. It is imperative to stop blaming the insurance companies and call on them to indemnify the insured, despite clear evidence of deliberate arson. "There has never been a verdict passed in favor of insurance companies. Therefore, we are forced to pay the insured customer, who thinks that he is always right," Mishal elaborated.

Referring to the same issue, Mr Dawoud Al Kurd, general manager of Al Arab Insurance Co., called for activating article no. 308 of the Penal Code which stipulates that "anyone found guilty of setting fire to his residence, *factory, stores or workshops* is sentenced to hard labor for seven years." Mr Al Kurd called on for more accuracy and credibility in investigations. He explained that sometimes the size of the indemnities of the insurance companies exceed the real financial costs of the damaged commodities.

More intensive efforts should be taken by every responsible institution, including insurance companies, police and civil defense. We must take into consideration the well-being of both counterparts, the client and the insurance company to prevent any cases of deliberate damage and unsolved crimes. ■



From the archives: Arson attacks, could they become a habit?

Business Chronicle

Investment and businessmen conference is a step in the right direction

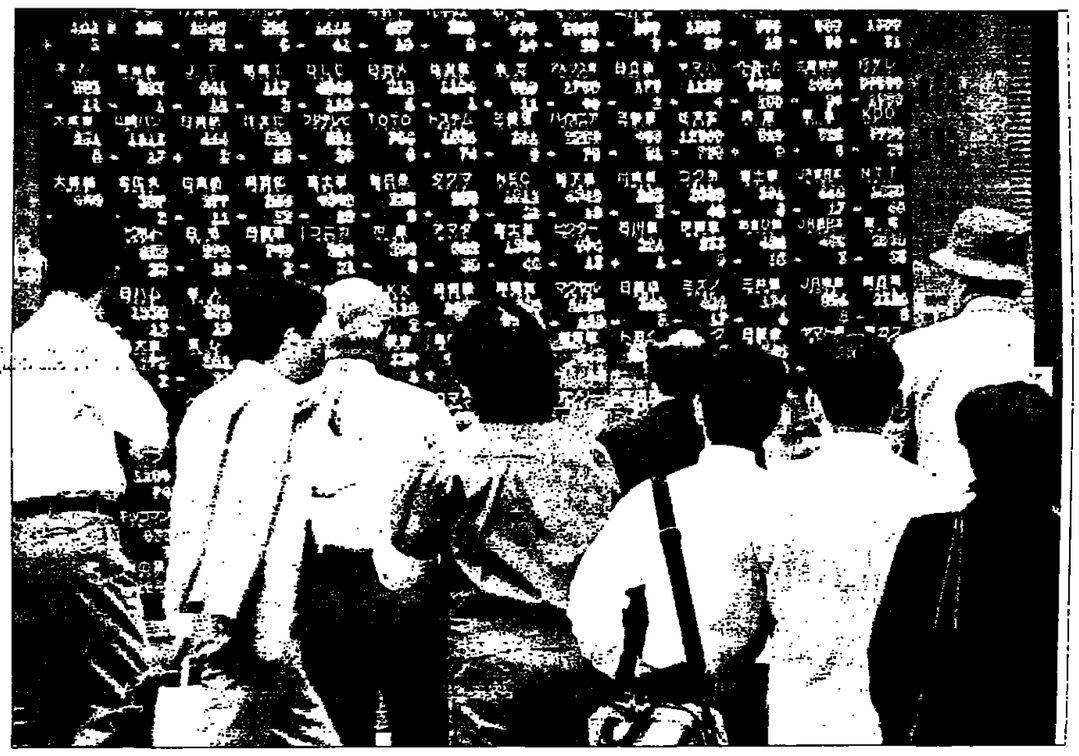
AS THE countdown for the first Conference of Jordanian Businessmen and Investors gets under way, the talk these days is whether such an initiative can succeed amidst the current economic stagnation.

The economic expert, Mohammed Asfour, wrote recently in his *Al Ra'i* column about the special significance of the conference—especially its timing and agenda. "The venue has a special importance because it highlights the role of the private sector in development, and could have a great impact on the investment climate in the Kingdom," Mr Asfour said. "First of all," he elaborates, "it comes from the idea of holding national conferences to discuss our problems and concerns. We need a base for national dialogue, to cover development in all economic sectors. It also proves that national conferences are not restricted to politics only." The expert continued to argue that the convening of the conference complies with the current policy launched by HRH Prince Hassan, the Regent, in establishing dialogue between the government on one side, and civil institutions and interested parties on the other.

The conference is expected to reinforce the role of private sector institutions in creating development. The private sector is best able to supply the highly qualified, motivated personnel and up-to-date technology, required to compete in the world today.

Furthermore, the conference should call for a liberalization of national savings, directing them towards real and profitable investment projects in order to kick-start the stagnant investment market. Referring to the importance given to the private sector in making the conference a great success, Mr Asfour stressed that, "it's role is the cornerstone in enhancing investment, and could contribute a great deal to the eradication of poverty and the creation of new job opportunities."

The conference will be attempting to review the former economic and development policies; to avoid the mistakes from the past and to suggest alternative methods of enhancing development. This initiative has been greeted enthusiastically by the business community, and many useful resolutions are expected. Whether these resolutions ever get implemented or not is another story. Let's hope that action is taken as soon as the resolutions are penned. Let's not wait for the ink to dry!■



Japanese passersby crowd around stock prices lit up in a fall across the board outside a Tokyo brokerage 1 September. The Nikkei average dropped over three percent in early trading on Tuesday as sell-offs of stocks in the US and Europe sent the market to fresh 12-year laws. Shares pared losses but remained sharply lower by midday, ending the morning down 178.87 points or 1.27 percent at 13,929.02.

Reuters

Russian crisis saps company's hope

By Sharon LaFraniere

STARAYA KUPAVNA, Russia—When the Russian pharmaceutical company Akrihin was put up for sale in early May, analysts predicted buyers would come running.

The firm's partly refurbished factory an hour east of Moscow produces a variety of medicines in demand in Russia. It's books are in order. It's workers are paid. It's management is rated highly, and it's profits have jumped three years in a row. "All transaction investors are expected to greet it enthusiastically," proclaimed one financial publication of the proposed sale.

But no buyers showed up, at least none willing to pay the initial asking price of $186 million, or even the reduced price of $150 million. That response speaks volumes about how once-eager foreign investors have turned sour on Russia, which is now in the midst of its worst financial crisis since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

The enthusiasm of foreign investors made Russia's fledgling stock market the world's best performer last year. But they began to pull out last fall after the onset of Asia's financial collapse. This month's headlines only seemed to justify their flight, with the crash of the ruble, the reshuffling in the Kremlin, the government's default on some of its debt and the collapse of some banks.

For ordinary Russians, the disappearance of investors is distressing news, because it means companies such as Akrihin will be cut off from a potential source of capital that could enable them to produce cheaper, high-quality goods. That was part of the promise of capitalism, and many Russians are still waiting to see it fulfilled.

Russia's fast-moving financial crisis is hammering businesses like Akrihin in other, even more immediate ways. Akrihin depends on the banks to transfer payments from its customers and send its own payments to partners and suppliers. Now the nearly bankrupt banks are simply sitting on the funds, or releasing them weeks late, according to Grigori Levitsky, Akrihin's chief financial officer. Some customers refuse to pay, saying they fear the banks will just gobble up their money.

Moreover, Akrihin needs foreign currency to pay its foreign suppliers, and foreign currency has dried up in Russia. "Where shall we buy it? How much is it going to cost?" asked Levitsky. "We need to pay for raw materials which have already been delivered."

Akrihin's sales also are dropping because customers, forced to wait months on end to receive their wages and government pensions, can't afford even medicine. "We have stopped lots of work," said Alexander Tyulyaev, Akrihin's 25-year-old chief of marketing. "We stopped reconstruction. We stopped our advertising campaign. We stopped purchases of new equipment. We are hoping the financial crisis will go by, and we can continue."

Even if the crisis does abate, however, the flight of foreign investment from Russia likely will hurt consumers and the domestic companies that want to sell to them for years to come. Russian stores are filled with goods now, but more than half of the products are imported, and the prices often are exorbitant for a typical Russian, who lives on a monthly salary of $130. Import duties alone boost the price tags by about one-fifth.

Companies such as Akrihin offer the hope of cheaper goods, but they need money to retool the aged, outmoded factories left by the Communists. Russian banks typically don't provide long-term loans to businesses, or do so only on highly onerous terms. Russian industrialists are few and far between, and in no position now to finance factories. That leaves only one source of capital: foreign investors.

Not long ago, Akrihin might have attracted them. Even as late as July, as the government tried to ward off bankruptcy with international loans and tax raids, some investors still had faith that Russia would pull out of its downward financial spiral.

But any lingering hope evaporated on Aug. 17 with the devaluation of the ruble and the government's announcement that it essentially would write off some of its short-term debt, paying investors no more than 20 cents on the dollar, by some estimates. Financial analysts say Russia may not see foreign investors again for years, leaving such companies as Akrihin starved for capital.

Now one of Russia's largest manufacturers of pharmaceutical drugs, Akrihin reported net profits of $8 million last year, compared with $2.6 million in 1995.

That was a nice figure for the prospectus when the Russian firm Alfa Capital Investments Ltd. decided to sell its 80 percent ownership of Akrihin this spring. The firm had not planned to hang onto Akrihin for long, company officials said, but had hoped simply to let it grow and then collect its profit after the stock value rose. It made its move in May, at a time when its Moscow-based counterparts also were feeling the brunt of the financial crisis and shedding properties. "They need money," said Tyulyaev, the marketing chief. "Now. Right now. Today."

According to those familiar with the deal, Alfa Capital planned to sell its stock to a group of investors. Then Akrihin would join the two or three other Russian firms whose shares are listed on the London Stock Exchange.

Potentially, that move could have given it access to more capital. With more financing, and more know-how, the firm could broaden its product line from pills and ointments to injected solutions that are not currently available in Russia.

But in the two weeks after Akrihin was put up for sale, the Russian stock market plunged almost 25 percent, and Alfa Capital eventually was forced to cancel the offer.

When Akrihin will get another crack at the kind of financing Western firms enjoy is hard to say. That depends on foreign investors. And for now, they have vanished.■

La Times-Washington Post News Service

The Star Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly OnLine http:// star.arabia.com

MARKET WATCH

29 Aug.—1 Sep.

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	%	%	%	%
	* Philadelphia Bank 5.00 * Rafia Plastic Industry 5.00	* International Textile 5.88	* Sea Insurance 5.38 * National Industry 5.41	* Al Lolo Industr 5.00
	* National Industry 5.13	%	%	* Investment Bank 5.66 * Irbid Electricity 5.88 * National Industry 4.00
	%			%
General Price Pointer	182.730	180.550	179.480	178.010
Trade Volume	1.006.226	873.952	851.861	1.339.490
Stock Volume	741829	647681	671901	659821
Highest Traded Stocks				
	* Arab Bank 181.150	* Arab Bank 395.995	* Arab Bank 203.530	* Arab Bank 444.435

All data provided by ACCESS Tel: 646868 Fax: 646949

Cross-cultural influence

Arab poetry in motion

Ritsos' Influence on Contemporary Arabic Poetry **By Fakhri Saleh, (in Arabic), Arab Esablishment for Research and Publishing, 1998, pp127**

Reviewed by Rasheed Al Roussan

THROUGHOUT HISTORY, Greek verse has always played a vital part in shaping poetry through the innovative techniques and structures of poets, beginning with the Homeric epic to the modern verse of Constantine Cavafy. However, contemporary Greek poets have added a new flavor to written verse; their love for detail and the rich and varied experiences one goes through in everyday life.

One of the poets who have contributed immensely to the style and theme of the Greek poem is Yannis Ritsos (1909-1990).

Ritsos' influence on Contemporary Arabic Poetry, is among Fakhri Saleh's recent translations. Here, the writer has sought to shed light on the impact of Ritsos' poetry on modern Arab verse, in relation to its form, content, and meaning.

The book begins with a brief summery on the life of the Greek poet. Born in a town called Monimafasia, Ritsos went through many traumatic experiences in his life. His father had become crazy after he lost his wealth. Immediately after that his mother and brother died. But this is not only. Tragedy seemed to beset the poet through out his life. Ritsos' sister, for instance, also went insane.

These circumstances forced Ritsos to leave his miserable past, and start a new one in Athens. As a result, when you read his poetry you will find a melancholic tone in most of his works.

Fakhri Saleh faced the challenge of translating 50 poems by the Greek poet. He points out in the book that through the translated phases from Greek to English and then Arabic, the meaning of the original poems were somewhat watered down. However, Saleh has done an excellent job in conveying the essence of the poems which he meticulously translated from English to Arabic.



In this collection, the reader can discern how Ritsos' poetry dwelled on the particulars of everyday life. A poem titled "After the Party" describes a scene from a party in minute detail. Through the use of auditory and visual images, the poet fuses the real with the fantastic. Ideas swiftly shift from one scene to the other. We read about the magical moon, eyes of people dancing and talking in the night, the sudden gods of beauty and elegance.

In the translated collection, Saleh says that the essence of Ritsos' poetry lies in the ability to master what he labels as "counterparts": night and day, hope and despair, life and death, *etc.*

Although the topics of his poetry may seem simple, there is a profound dimension to such themes where the poet fluctuates between the ordinary and the supernatural and the very basic interwoven relations between the two. These almost come through as mundane, something that is experienced in every day life.

The other daring task of the writer is when he meticulously shows how Ritsos' poetry has influenced the modern Arab poem, especially from the seventies onwards. Saleh states that previous translations of the masters poetry played a great role in elevating the level of the new generation of Arab writers.

In this respect, Saadi Yusef's translations have had a great impact on Arabic verse. And in general Arab poets across the region, have benefited greatly from the English and French translations of the Greek poet.

Salah pointed out that Ritsos' innovative styles and themes have saved the contemporary Arabic poem from the "frigidity" it suffered in the seventies. Today the Arab poem has become alive again, full of meaning, vitality, and vibrancy.

Arab poets, the translator says, echoed the spirit of the Ritsosian poem. These include Nuree Jarah, Lina Al Taybeh, and Amjad Naser. In his poem of "Absence", Naser's builds up a detailed pattern of visual images. He shifts from an ordinary scene to an abstract one. It begins with an image of an old man walking in a decaying setting where children are playing and women are mingling. Suddenly, there is a scene of clocks everywhere, the poet personifies this image by depicting the clocks as dead people. The detailed description, plus the gloomy atmosphere is a typical style of Ritsos.

The book is intellectually stimulating and is a well worthwhile read for any scholar, poet or linguist who is interested in cross cultural linkage. ■

Genesis, Darwin and Martians

Life on Earth, and Beyond, **by Paul Davies**

Reviewed by Martin Ince

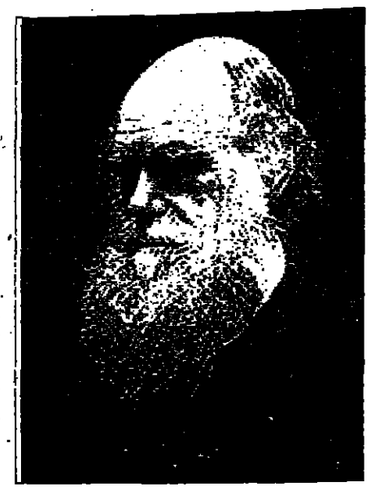
WE ARE living in the era in which the origin of the universe, of consciousness, and of life itself are ceasing to be *matters of speculation* and are turning instead into experimental science. And, except to the Bible literalist, the truth that is emerging is more gripping *than any myth.*

Paul Davies is a physicist best-known to the public for books on the origin of the universe and the implications for religion of our increasing knowledge of where the cosmos came from. In this book he moves on from the early highlights of Genesis 1—the creation of the universe, light, the firmament and dry land—to the "fifth miracle," the creation of plants and therefore of the earliest life.

There have been living things on the Earth for almost 4 billion of its 4.5 billion years. But as Davies sees it, life was not created in a single Genesis-type event. At first it might have been difficult to tell whether the creatures that turned into our ancestors were living or not. And although everything now alive, from human beings, pine trees, and bacteria, sprung from a common ancestor and uses a pattern in which DNA conveys information about constructing new creatures, our ancestors at that time probably competed with early life forms organised differently, which failed to flourish on the hot, volcano-infested, meteorite-bombarded early Earth.

Many theories exist for how life started. Most are variants on Charles Darwin's view that it began in "some warm little pond" in which chemical reactions, perhaps energised by lightning, could produce the essentials of life. Another apparently bizarre theory, by biochemist Graham Cairns-Smith, involves clay minerals which can store information in their structure in much the same way that DNA does. Organic material could have come along later to imitate the configuration pioneered by clays.

But Davies' preference is that life started in more vigorous surroundings. He points out that the most *primitive* creatures now living, dwell in the volcanic depths of the oceans. Here there are chemicals aplenty and



the energy needed to build them up into living form. Subsurface tunnels and cavities could have trapped complex molecules and allowed them to build up membranes against the external environment, giving rise to the cell structure used today by all but the most modest living things.

This speculation is all the more fascinating because it points to the prospect that life on Earth does not exist in a vacuum. It may be more of an interplanetary joint venture in which terrestrial and Martian life have mingled over billions of years.

The idea of life on Mars has been through many ups and downs since Giovanni Schiaparelli reported seeing suspiciously straight lines on its surface in 1877. He called them canali, channels, with no idea that English-speakers would assume he meant canals of artificial origin. We now know that the markings were spurious.

In the 1970s, NASA's two Viking Mars landers carried a series of experiments designed to detect biological activity. The results were ambiguous and some scientists insist that they indicate *life. More recently*, a group of British scientists had claimed in 1989 that a a Mars meteorite contained material suspiciously like Earthly living matter.

But perhaps the accuracy of the claims about Mars meteorites is less interesting than the general point they prove: that Mars material arrives here routinely, after being blown off the surface of Mars by meteorite impacts. In 1911, a Mars meteorite landing at Nakhla in Egypt killed a passing dog, perhaps the most improbable cause of death ever recorded. It is known that earthly bacteria can survive conditions akin to those in deep space, including cold, radiation and vacuum. Davies points out that survival characteristics like these may have evolved because they were needed, not by accident.

Terrestrial bacteria live deep inside the Earth and in other hostile environments. Others have been revived after thousands of years in deep-freeze conditions in Siberia, implying that they could survive a lengthy period in space. Space probes have also taught us that the hostile, dry Mars we see today is not a true reflection of the planet as it was in the early years of the solar system, when life was getting started on the Earth. Then it was wet and wild, and the river valleys and volcanoes of that era can still be seen.

This means that life could have started on both planets at the same time and under similar conditions. And in this era, the greater number of meteorite impacts on Mars and the Earth would have made it more common for rock and the living material it contained to be flung into space and find its way to a new planet to mingle with life there.

For Davies this is just one example of ways in which the universe is friendly to the development of life. But spare a thought for the Bible fundamentalist. If one is unhappy with the idea of a monkey among the ancestors, how is one expected to cope with Martians in the family tree? ■

Financial Times Syndication

Global fight for human rights

War Crimes: Brutality, Genocide, Terror and the Struggle for Justice, **By Aryeh Neier**

Reviewed by Malcolm Rutherford

THERE IS an important subject from which many of us tend to shy away because it is so complex. What exactly are war crimes and what should be done about them?

For example, if it came to light that some of the people involved in the Irish peace settlement had been previously engaged in atrocities, should they be prosecuted and, if so, by whom?

Again, if by any chance the Americans turned out to have made a mistake in identifying a pharmaceuticals plant in Sudan as a contributor to the manufacture of chemical weapons in Iraq, who should be held to blame for the *damage and to whom should they be* accountable?

The questions may be topical and hypothetical, but they are not substantially new. A few months ago some of the British veterans in Asia turned their backs on the Emperor of Japan because they believed that Japan had not sufficiently apologized for, nor compensated for, Japanese behaviour in the Second World war. Swiss banks are still embarrassed about what they did with Nazi gold.

And if you look at the war in Vietnam, there was the spectacular massacre at My Lai. Lieutenant William Calley, the principal officer on the spot, was subsequently court-martialled, though given a light sentence. His immediate superior, Captain Medina, was acquitted. Yet if Medina had been convicted, charges might logically have gone up to the top of the US military and political command. Who was responsible for the policy and the strategy in the first place? Great powers, even democratic ones, are not immune from war crimes.

Neither do great powers of any kind like intervention in their internal *affairs. Nikita Krushchev denounced* the crimes of Joseph Stalin in 1956 in a move that with hindsight may be seen as the beginning of the end of the Soviet Union, but there was no hint of an international or even internal inquiry into the details. It is very unlikely that China would agree to international investigations into what goes on in its own territory. Even Britain and France, anxious to promote human rights abroad, are reluctant to allow international agencies on to their domestic turf.



War leads to Tragedy

There may be changes ahead. Two international tribunals have been established in the last few years, one to deal with war crimes in former Yugoslavia, the other with those in Rwanda. By the end of the century, there may well be a *permanent international criminal court* to deal with war crimes in general. The first steps to set it up have already been taken.

That is what this book by Aryeh Neier is largely about. Neier's credentials are *impeccable. An early German-Jewish refugee in the US, he is a former* executive director of Human Rights Watch, which he founded. He was also director of the American Civil Liberties Union. He is even-handed: in the late 1970s, he defended the right of American Nazis to demonstrate *in Skokie, Illinois, or* indeed anywhere else in America, on grounds of freedom of speech.

Yet—and this where some caution must come in—Neier is relentless in his pursuit and further development of international law. Even some liberals may doubt whether this. As Neier points out, since the Second World War several countries have dealt with past domestic atrocities without resorting to massive retribution. El Salvador and Argentina are examples in Latin America. Greece after the exodus of the colonels went a little further with its "dejuntafication," which included forced retirement of officers and prosecutions of public figures involved in the crimes of the former regime. South Africa is pursuing its Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which does not preclude prosecutions, but lays the emphasis on reconciliation so that the country can understand and come to terms with its past.

Neier tends to think that many of these approaches are too mild. He does not overlook, but does not convincingly override, the argument that if a new civilian regime in Latin America were to turn wholesale on the armed forces, the military might very well mount another coup. There is a case for amnesty in the pursuit of fostering democracy. Neier believes that the rule of law is more important than the democratic political process. It is a fine point, from which many will dissent.

There are other practical reasons for doubting the comprehensive international legal approach. The reason why the allies succeeded in applying some justice at Nuremberg was that that they had won the war. The same went for the Americans in Japan. The reason why none of the allies wanted to go too far was that they wanted to rebuild a civil society, to which on the whole they successfully contributed.

To revert to the present: the atrocities in former Yugoslavia and Rwanda are appalling. Rwanda, where the killings amounted to around 800,000, acted entirely within its own borders, apparently confident that no outside power would intervene and that the country could avoid internal reprisals.

It is right that there should be international tribunals on the affairs of both places. At the very least, they may act as a deterrent elsewhere. Some offenders will be brought to court and the freedom of movement of others is limited by the fear of arrest.

But do not expect too much from international courts. Can anyone imagine Slobadan Milosevic being taken to the Hague for trial? Nevertheless, the rise of cross-frontier terrorism means that the whole subject demands more attention. ■

Financial Times Syndication

AUGUST 1998

A special section offering fresh perspectives on global issues prepared for

The Star

THE WORLDPAPER

PRINTED IN SIX LANGUAGES ON FIVE CONTINENTS

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Malthus's real message:

Hunger, far from being inevitable, is the mother of invention

►Today, with two centuries of hindsight, it is easy to laugh at Thomas Malthus. His celebrated assertion that human population growth will inevitably outstrip food supplies has been stood on its head by the 'Green Revolution.' So why pay attention to the anniversary of his 1798 *Essay on the Principles of Population*? Because Malthus, far from being a doomsayer, was an optimist who believed that humans would 'muddle through' to a solution—as long as they were not waylaid by the visions of perfection that politicians like to peddle



Stocked shelves: Malthus's reasoning, that mankind was doomed to starvation, has been undone by record-breaking grain harvests. Since 1960, the growth in the world's food production has outpaced population growth and shows few signs of abating.

By John Madeley

EXACTLY TWO CENTURIES ago a young, obscure Anglican priest in the south of England wrote—anonymously—an *Essay on the Principles of Population*. Neither his obscurity or anonymity lasted long. His 55,000-word essay brought immediate fame for the 32-year-old Reverend Thomas Robert Malthus.

The fame has lasted. Malthus, a mathematics graduate, is widely regarded as the first professional in the field of demography. Yet the analysis that made his name—that the human population will inevitably outstrip the earth's ability to feed it—is only part of what he said. The world has overlooked the context in which he made this observation, and has ignored a vital "sweetener in the tail" of his argument.

REPORTING FROM LONDON

Malthus wrote his essay, published in 1798, as a response to the views of English political philosopher William Godwin and the Marquis de Condorcet, a French philosopher. Writing soon after the French Revolution of 1789, which awakened hopes of widespread change, Godwin and Condorcet forecast a perfect future for the world. In this world goods would be shared by all, everyone's needs satisfied and population growth would be in balance with food supplies.

Improvements in medicine, the removal of contagious diseases, the availability of more wholesome food and other scientific advances would improve the strength of the body to such an extent, Condorcet believed, that people would have an indefinite lifespan. Godwin even conjectured that "passion between the sexes (that is, sexual intercourse) may in time be extinguished."

While admitting the attractions of such utopia, Malthus took the view that "the power of population is infinitely greater than the power in the earth to produce subsistence for man." Furthermore he believed that population "when unchecked," increases in geometrical ratio (1,2,4,8,16...), but that subsistence increases only in arithmetical ratio (1,2,3,4,5...). It is for this prediction that Malthus is renowned—and regarded as a "prophet of doom."

If his analysis was right, far from a "perfect future world," most people can only look forward to hunger and poverty.

As it turned out, Malthus did not foresee the widespread availability of birth control measures, and that these would make it realistically possible for demographers to forecast that the world population will eventually stabilize (around 2200, according to United Nations estimates). At the global level, his thesis has been proved wrong. "Food supply has more than doubled in the past 40 years, much faster than population growth," says the World Health Organization's 1998 World Health Report. Yet population is still running ahead of food supply in sub-Saharan Africa, increasing at 2.6 percent a year, whereas food supply is rising by under 2 percent.

Neither did Malthus foresee how higher earnings would enable people to save for a better future, and would want to have fewer children in order to safeguard their living standards. He did not anticipate advances in technology, the opening up of new agricultural land and the benefits that would come from improved transport.

Nevertheless, in his essay Malthus made great contributions to the ongoing debate about our future. One of them was to puncture the idea of a grand process of perfectibility of man and society, a process that would bring about de-sexed, never-hungry people, equal and perfect immortals. Ending hunger is rightly a concern of the international community today, but equality and perfection are unlikely to be achieved this side of heaven.

And yet 200 years later, there are other "grand process of perfectibility" ideas, although the language used to promote them is a great deal more careful. Advocates of economic globalization see a world where unfettered free trade will raise living standards for all, taking us to a global society with indefinite benefits where everyone's needs will be satisfied.

Such a vision ignores the way that globalization is leading to greater inequality between North and South, and threatening livelihoods in developing countries. Under World Trade Organization rules, for example, countries can no longer stipulate that foreign investors use local labor and materials. The scope for local initiatives to overcome poverty and hunger is weakened.

But these "local initiatives" bring us back to the Reverend Malthus. The world has overlooked something quite breathtaking that he said towards the end of his essay. While the "general law"—population increasing faster than food supply—"undoubtedly produces much partial evil," Malthus concluded that: "a little reflection may, perhaps, satisfy us that it produces a great overbalance of good."

A great overbalance of good! Here is this "prophet of doom" saying that the population problem is for the good. Why this sweetener in the tail of a stinging argument? Because Malthus believed that population growth and food shortages are two issues that "excite universal exertion," acting as a "powerful stimulus" to action, with people compelled by necessity to use their skills and ingenuity to tackle these problems.

People would contribute to solving these problems, he argued, with faculties awakened "that might otherwise have lain forever dormant." Added Malthus: "It seems every way probable that even the acknowledged difficulties occasioned by the law of population tend rather to promote, than impede, the general purpose of Providence."

Malthus observed in 1798 that, "we are touching on a period big with the most important changes, changes that would in some measure be decisive of the future fate of mankind."

In 1998 we seem to be touching a similar period. From this English cleric, and from the experience of our time, we can perhaps glimpse how the application of skills and ingenuity, in a diverse variety of situations, offers more hope for the future than any grand process of perfectibility. ◐

JOHN MADELEY IS THE AUTHOR OF *Trade and the Poor: The Impact of International Trade on Developing Countries.*

How much more technology can the environment stand?

Filipinos paying for their population growth with capital, not income

By Vet Vitug

UNTIL RECENTLY a majority of Filipinos believed that only the lazy go hungry. Who could argue with them? The fields were expansive and fertile. The vast seas teemed with fish.

REPORTING FROM MANILA

Over the years, however, the number of Filipinos multiplied. Rice fields were paved over to accommodate expanding communities. As fish catches dwindled and many forests became barren, it dawned on many that the country's resources are not inexhaustible. When 50 people died after eating poisonous roots to alleviate their hunger during a famine in Mindanao this April, everyone started to wonder if there's enough food to feed the burgeoning population.

The short answer is yes. The Philippines still has more than enough resources, manpower and technology to feed its people. What it doesn't have is the political will. And, in the long term, there is a question about the ability of the country's environment to cope with the technology-assisted demands being made upon it.

As it stands, despite dramatic increases in food production millions of Filipinos still suffer from lack of food. The reason is lack of money.

At the height of the Mindanao famine, for instance, nearby warehouses of the state-owned National Food Authority were bulging with rice, the country's staple. The farmers could have escaped hunger and death—if only they had money. A prolonged drought caused by El Niño had destroyed their crops and rendered them penniless.

Mindful of this incident, the incoming government of President Joseph Estrada has promised to make agricultural development a priority. But meeting the expectations of the poor and dealing with the impact of a growing population has been a challenge faced by past, current and future administrations. So far, their rhetoric has spoken louder than their actions.

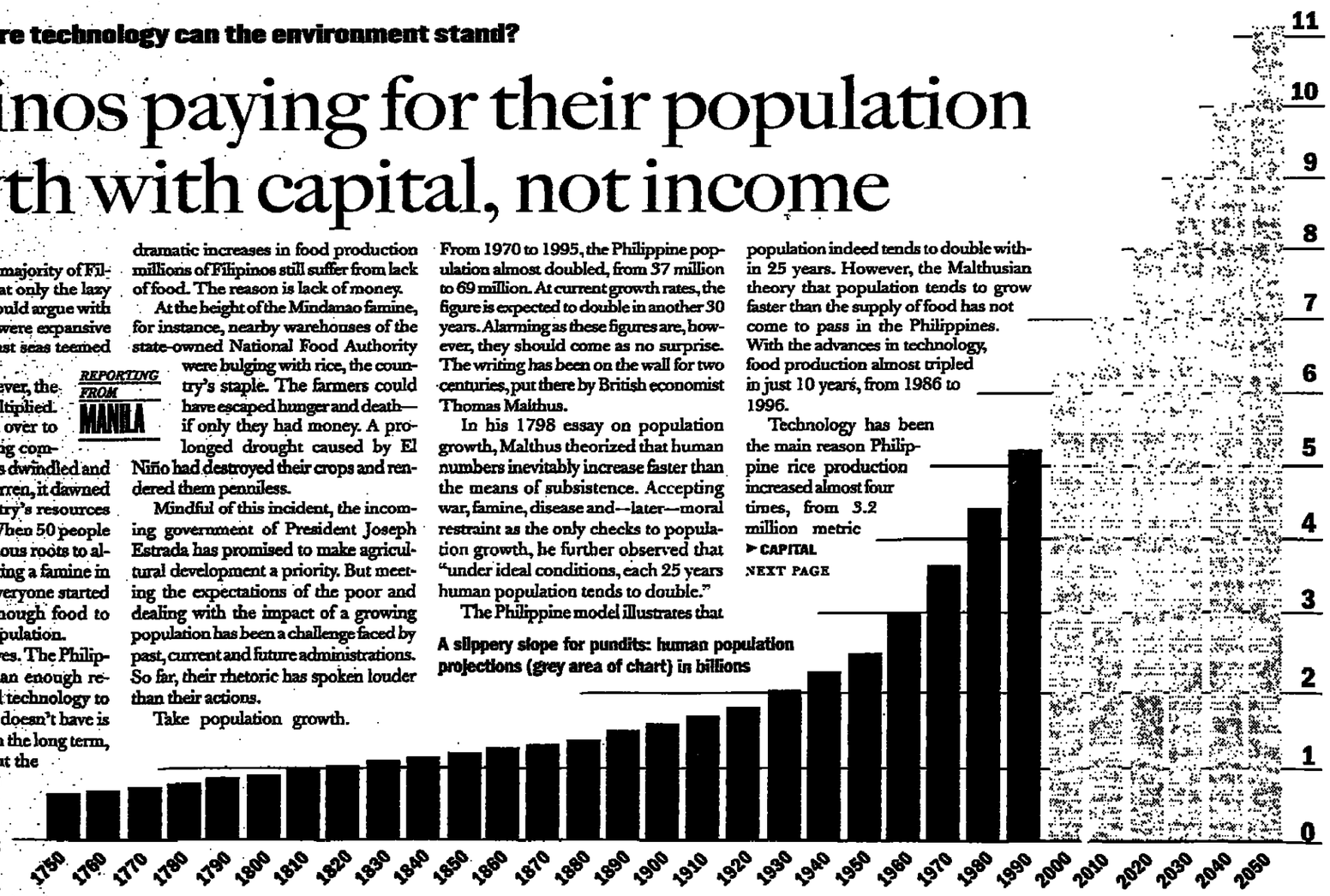
Take population growth. From 1970 to 1995, the Philippine population almost doubled, from 37 million to 69 million. At current growth rates, the figure is expected to double in another 30 years. Alarming as these figures are, however, they should come as no surprise. The writing has been on the wall for two centuries, put there by British economist Thomas Malthus.

In his 1798 essay on population growth, Malthus theorized that human numbers inevitably increase faster than the means of subsistence. Accepting war, famine, disease and—later—moral restraint as the only checks to population growth, he further observed that "under ideal conditions, each 25 years human population tends to double."

The Philippine model illustrates that population indeed tends to double within 25 years. However, the Malthusian theory that population tends to grow faster than the supply of food has not come to pass in the Philippines. With the advances in technology, food production almost tripled in just 10 years, from 1986 to 1996.

Technology has been the main reason Philippine rice production increased almost four times, from 3.2 million metric

►CAPITAL NEXT PAGE



A slippery slope for pundits: human population projections (grey area of chart) in billions

Politics achieves what population growth alone cannot

Black South Africans inherit apartheid's Malthusian legacy

By Mathatha Tsedu

REPORTING FROM JOHANNESBURG

SOUTH AFRICA is a country of two nations," Thabo Mbeki told Parliament in May. One nation, the country's deputy president said, is relatively rich, well serviced, lives in first world conditions—and is white. The other is poor, under-serviced and lives in squalor. It is black.

For South Africans, any effort to assess the relevance of Thomas Malthus has to take Mbeki's observation into account. For one of the two populations, Malthusian theories on the relationship between population and food supply seem laughable. The other, however, has been maneuvered by the direct and indirect legacies of apartheid into a position where the long-dead English cleric's theories have a grim relevance.

Detractors of Malthus point out that, due to technology, population growth has not outstripped food supplies. Because high-tech agri-corporations have revolutionized food production, the world's food production has grown more rapidly than its population (which is currently six times larger than when Malthus wrote his famous essay in 1798). Instead of universal famine, countries such as the US export food.

While this is true, for many black areas of South Africa Malthus's point is actually correct. Virtually untouched by the technology that has revolutionized agriculture the world over, and hamstrung by the policies of the apartheid regime that left only 13 percent of the most barren land in their hands, growing numbers of rural blacks are struggling to survive in the midst of an ecological disaster.

Today, there is hardly any food production taking place on the land nominally owned by the black majority. The ever-increasing demand for residential areas to cope with growing population has swallowed great chunks of farmland; much of the rest is steadily deteriorating. Where 100 years ago people would have had cattle and large tracts of lands to graze them or plough for crops, today they have one or two cows—if they are lucky. Virtually all food has to be brought in from the major white farms and mills to the urban and semi urban areas.

The cumulative effect of the land dispossession that was consolidated in the 1913 Land Act—and which the new government has not been able to undo—has been the deforestation, over crowding and exhaustion of the black rural hinterlands of South Africa. Because of this deprivation, rural blacks still believe that the more children one has, the safer the future—they will work if they are men, or bring in some money in the form of dowry if they are women.

Unless the land hunger of the rural blacks is attended to, their high birth rates will lead to further degradation of what land they have

Meanwhile, the white population and a growing number of the black elite are reducing their birth rate.

These people can afford to have children. But they have competing motivations. Marose Diale, a nursing sister in Soweto, the sprawling metropolis that was built as a dormitory city for blacks who provide Johannesburg with its labor, says considerations such as careers, mobility and quality of family life are the reasons given by people who come in for sterilization.

There is also a growing number of women who are having their first babies at 40 but who have been married for years, showing that marriage is no longer seen as necessarily leading to immediate child bearing. "More and more educated women come and say they have two children and do not need more. But the uneducated women from the informal settlements are still the ones having seven to nine children. It seems lack of either education or the absence of other things to do lead to baby making in these communities," observes Diale.

Her point is borne out by statistics compiled by the Reproductive Research Unit based at the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital, reputed to be the largest hospital in the Southern Hemisphere. The number of women giving birth in areas serviced by the hospital has gone down by over a quarter in the past 20 years. This is attributable to greater use of oral contraceptives by many educated and or working women who are able to determine what number of children they want to have and when.

Similarly, statistics of the rural areas show little discernible reduction in the birth rate. But even there, the educated elite behaves as its urban counterpart. Gone are the days of having a baby every second year until menopause.

But what of Malthus and his warnings? For South Africa, unless the land hunger of the rural blacks is attended to, their high birth rates will lead to further degradation of what land they have. If that happens, violence, famine and disease are inevitable and Malthus will—through a failure of politics—be proved right.

Furthermore, without land reform the two nations that Mbeki spoke about will continue to exist side by side, belying the vaunted freedom that the world worships Nelson Mandela as a symbol of.

MATHATHA TSEDU IS POLITICAL EDITOR OF *The Sowetan*, A JOHANNESBURG-BASED DAILY NEWSPAPER.

CAPITAL, NOT INCOME

Continued from previous page

tons to 11.2 million metric, between 1986 and 1996. The figure is significant because rice, being the staple food of 85 percent of Filipinos, serves as the barometer of The Philippines' food supply.

The country is host to the International Rice Research Institute which has developed hundreds of rice varieties adaptable to all types of soil: upland, lowland, irrigated, rainfed, flood-prone and even the lahar-swept rice fields of Central Luzon, the country's "breadbasket." The Institute, along with local agriculture-related agencies, has also been promoting biodiversity in rice production areas to preserve the proper balance between high production technology and the natural environment.

Production of other foodstuffs such as fish, and major crops like coconut, sugarcane, banana, pineapple, coffee and other crops followed the same trend as rice. From 1950 to 1975, for instance, fish production grew from 220,000 metric tons to 1.34 million metric tons. In the next 20 years, from 1976 to 1996, driven by advances in aquaculture, it doubled to 2.77 million metric tons.

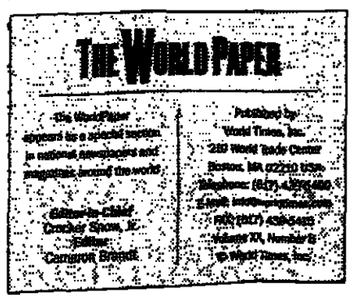
Production, however, must keep growing. A predominantly Catholic nation, population control programs in the Philippines have not made any significant impact on population growth. Birth control has always been a highly contentious issue between the Church and government. Perhaps as a form of compromise, the government limits its efforts to educating the people on the available means of birth control. Which of them to adopt becomes a personal choice between the couples.

As a result of these tentative efforts, the rate of population growth has slowed slightly. The coming of age of Filipino women has also helped—many are pursuing careers and postponing marriage until their 30s, then opting to have fewer children. The population grew by an average of 2.78 percent annually between 1970 and 1975, but dropped to 2.32 percent between 1990 and 1995. Despite the decrease, the total population still doubled, mainly because advances in medicine and public health mean Filipinos are living longer.

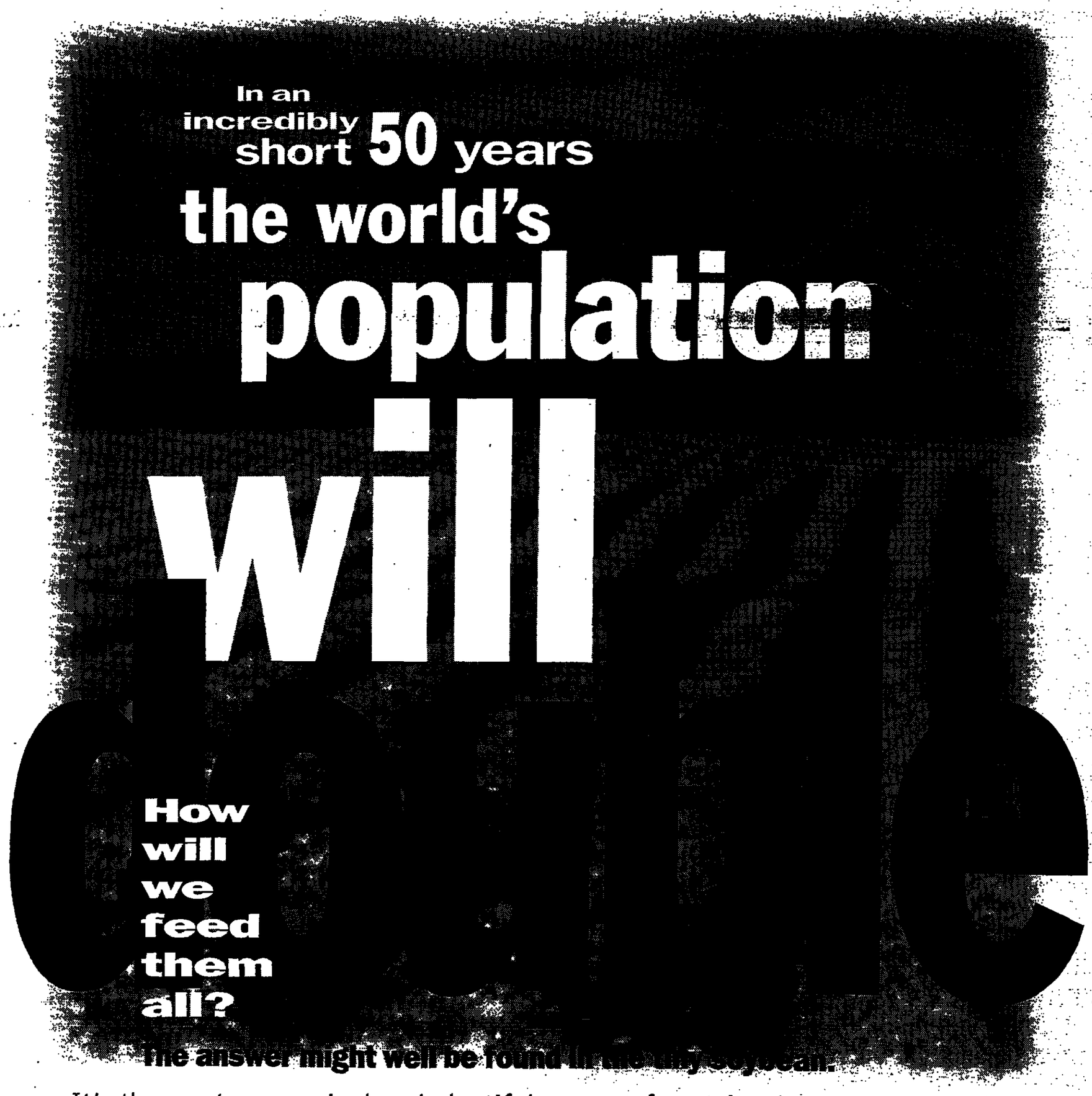
Does all of this mean Malthus and his warnings can be ignored?

No, if you believe that the returns from technology diminish over time. The extra food that has saved the Philippines from the Malthusian dilemma has come at a price: soil erosion and exhaustion, groundwater contaminated by fertilizer and pesticide runoff, the clearing of forests for arable land and reefs dynamited by fishermen. If this continues to be the price imposed by extra mouths to feed, how long can the Philippines keep paying?

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Telecentres excite Ugandans, but what about the poor?

By Aida Opoku-Mensah

NABWERU, UGANDA—"We want to learn this technology" says Semanda Umaru, a street hawker in Nabweru, on the outskirts of Uganda's capital, Kampala. "If we get a communications center, it could create job opportunities in our area and it can help us to get information about jobs."

The Internet is coming to Nabweru, one of five districts in Uganda that are being readied to be hooked up to modern telecommunications.

The move, being organized by the Acacia Initiative of the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC), has generated much popular excitement in this, the 14th poorest country in the world.

The Acacia Initiative is aimed at widening access to information and communications technologies in Africa, in the form "telecentres" that provide public access to telephone, fax, electronic mail and—most tantalizingly—the Internet.

But enticing as the project is, it raises questions as to whether poor people in developing countries, particularly those living outside city centers, ought to be charged for using information and communications services that are being increasingly viewed as a key strategy in combating poverty.

Nabweru currently has just one phone line to serve a district of 58,000 people and is typical of communications access outside the capital—there are 70,000 telephone lines in the whole of Uganda, almost three quarters of which serve subscribers in Kampala.

The telecentre, which will include 8 to 10 telephone lines, promises to transform the communications opportunities for people in the district.

"Currently, people have to go to Kampala for information," says Elizabeth Amuto, a Nabweru community development officer. "It costs money to travel and then they may find the person is not there or they don't have the information. This will save us time and money."

Unsurprisingly, telecentres are being touted by international experts as a way out of poverty.

They are a "powerful engine of rural development and a preferred instrument in the fight against poverty," says the World Bank in a report, Harnessing Information for Development.

"They could be the hub at the community level, through which a large number of information services can be dispensed," it adds, listing some of these services as document searaches on demand, video libraries for entertainment and education, health and nutrition training, government services, information on market prices and self-paced learning.

The Nabweru telecentre is not promising quite such an exhaustive list of services yet. But as news has spread, so expectations have been raised.

"This center will help our people because they lack information about producer prices," says Haji Sulaiman Mulindwa, a local chief and farmer who will sit on the Nabweru management board. "People will get information on agriculture, education, the nutrition of children and so on. We also expect the center to generate money."

"It will help us save time, solve our problems and make appointments so that we don't go somewhere and find no one there," adds Namubiru Kyotolye, an entrepreneur.

Sulaiman Kilyabia, also a farmer, hopes the center will bring him information about better agricultural practices. "I want higher yields so that I can earn money to send my children to school" says Sulaiman, a father of five.

And according to Amuto, it's good for women because lack of information has hampered women's ability to maximise their income-generating potential. "We have plenty of women's projects in this area but many remote villages can't get information on when there is an exhibition where they can bring their handicrafts," she says.

The IDRC believes a key reason why the centers are being welcomed warmly is that local communities concerned have been consulted widely - through workshops organized with the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST).

After the workshops the UNCST identified potential 'resource persons,' such as local chiefs, who would act as telecentre promoters. "Their job was to go back into the community to sensitise them about the telecentres. The response we've had has been phenomenal." says Council director Zerubabel Nyira.

But for all the optimism, fundamental concerns remains—some experts fear that such schemes may end up serving only those who can afford them.

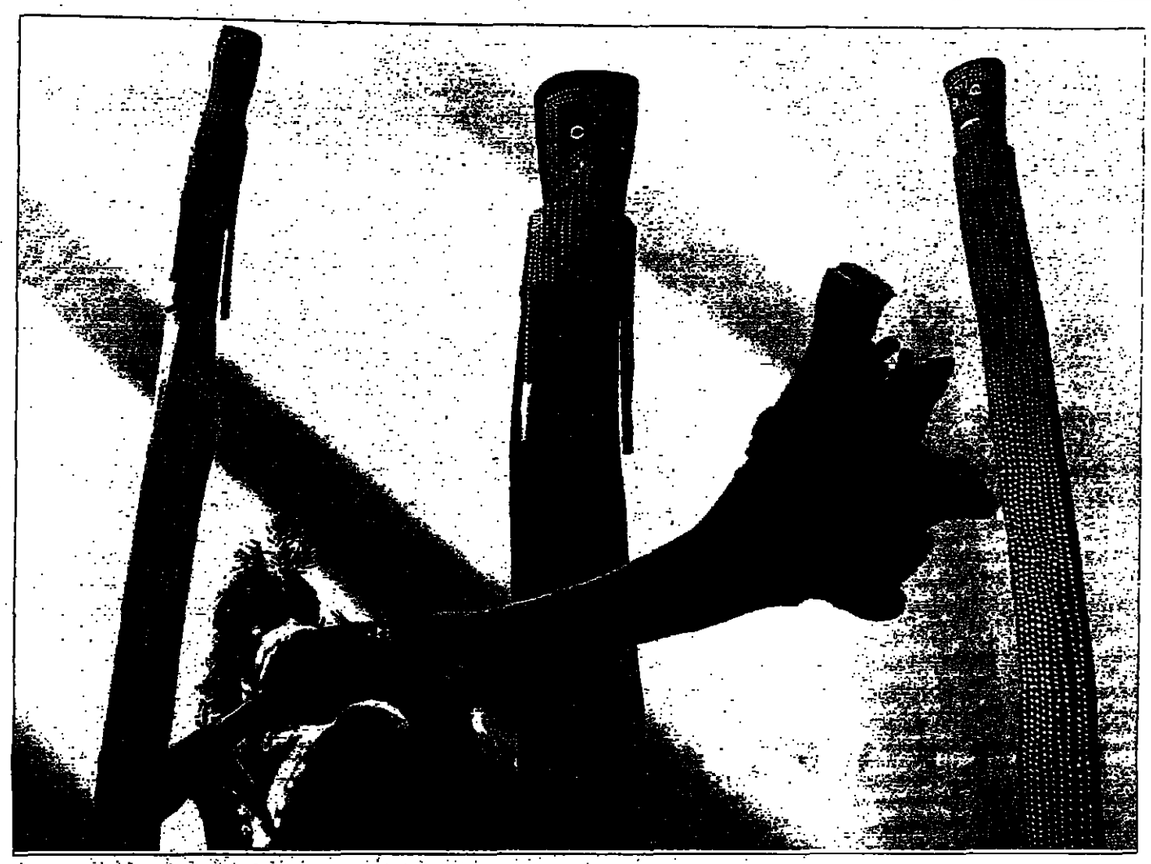
"But their sustainability depends on them being run on business lines and charging enough money to users to keep the operation sustainable. That may not be a bad thing but perhaps they should call a spade a spade and not raise expectations that these services will be affordable to everyone," he adds.

Indeed, there are plans to charge for the use of the facilities in Nabweru.

Rita Mukaaka, the programme officer responsible for the initiative at UNCST, says that a pricing system still needs to be worked out. But, she insists, the prices will be lower than those charged by existing Internet services in Uganda.

She rules out making the services available free of charge, saying that while this might be an incentive, it will not create "the sense of ownership and responsibility that we want the communities to have and which can make the initiative sustainable."

Mukaaka believes that the main customers for the telecentres will be farmers, traders, health workers, educators, youth, women's groups and civil leaders and that they will be able to pay for the service if charges are subsidized or costs shared.■



Sean Choolburra stands between sacred wooden "Aboriginal Mimi Spirit" sculptures whilst playing a didgeridoo made from a tree-truck during his performance in the Yiribana Gallery at Sydney's New South Wales Art Gallery 1 September. The exhibition of aboriginal objects from the gallery's collection consists of traditional depiction's of the ancestral beings. The indigenous people believed they roamed northern Australia's Arnhem Land during "Dreamtime," the mythological period before humans walked the earth.

Reuters

Panos

SCRAPBOOK

Hollywood: The violence zone

By Rasheed Al Roussan
Special to The Star

HOLLYWOOD, the world's number one movie industry, has never failed to dazzle us with super talent and breathtaking pictures. It is acknowledged that the two most important ingredients of a "Hollywood snack" are sex and violence. Violence, however is becoming more than a doze for many directors. Some action movies are of an extreme enthusiastic nature where you find blood all over your screen, bodies falling down from the sky and cars crashing every single minute. Many view the element of violence as appealing and fun to watch now and then, but is it entertainment or mere outrage?

"Natural Born Killers", directed by Oliver Stone, was a big hit when first shown on the silver screen in America. The film depicts the life of two serial killers that have become the center of the media's interest. The director tended to show how the American press is tangled with criminals especially those with criminal records. These people become more important than Wall Street news, and the media wants that to happen, in order to capture the interest of the public. A living example is the O.J. Simpson trial. However, the film contains violent scenes every five minutes or so. The duration of such scenes, plus the bloody slow-motion shots has turned the plot into a war zone. Unfortunately, the film didn't succeed in conveying the director's message as much as it was welcomed as an action hit.

However, Stone's "Platoon" was a balanced formula. The violence played a role in explaining one of the political dilemmas of America: the Vietnam War. One can't deny the bloody setting and gloomy atmospheres while watching the picture, but it served the movie well enough.

There is one American movie which is not a Hollywood production. "Faces of Death" is one of most violent and weirdest films ever made in the history of movies. You don't find actors or directors in this film, but real shots of people getting killed by whatever your mind can imagine. It is divided into five parts. Each part captures different scenes starting with executions and ending up with cannibal tribes eating a living body. You can find it mostly in every film store in Amman. Apart from being a real horrifying experience, the film is really popular all over, especially for those with sadistic and masochist inclinations!

Why does a movie of such bloody nature become so popular in America?

Statistics show that many violent films resulted in real crimes in different parts of the United States. The films "The Godfather" and "Natural Born Killers", are living examples. No matter how you try to alienate yourself when watching such pictures, you can't but stare into this world of decay and murder. Staring isn't a problem, addiction is dangerous however.

There is another factor tangled with violence: language. Taboos are a must these days in action films. The repetition of such words makes you sometimes forget the movie and start counting how many F-words are there in each scene! This kind of violent attitude in language is also a welcomed feature for many. You end up watching a film, which combines both words and fists. A famous movie by Al Pacino, "Scar Face", is a good example of this. The scenario is all hard talking, not to mention fierce weapons and springs of blood.

Rambo is another mambo jambo hit. You can picture Stallone saying, "Killer is my middle name!". Yes it is, actors like Stallone and Schwarzenegger are becoming stereotypes of muscles and bullets.

Despite the fact that violence is controlled in few films, the silver lining proves that the "Hollywood snack" of uproar and action is becoming increasingly digestable. In the end, what really counts is the box office profit for Hollywood producers, but the public's taste and understanding of violence in films does play a part as well.■

California's olive oil revival

By Mary Curtius

MARYSVILLE, CALIFORNIA—In the normal course of events, Nan McEvoy and Michael Henwood never would have crossed paths. She is a wealthy newspaper heiress and doyenne of San Francisco society. He is a farmer of modest means with hands scarred by a lifetime of manual labor.

But the heiress and the farmer share a single passion: olive oil. McEvoy makes it from trees she imported to her Petaluma farm from Tuscany. Henwood harvests the fruit from a 100-year-old orchard that stood abandoned for decades on his father's Marysville ranch.

Both love the trees for their history, which has been entwined with human existence since the dove brought Noah an olive branch to show the flood that destroyed humanity had receded. Both believe that California orchards will eventually produce oils as fine as any pressed in Italy.

The two are members of a growing band of entrepreneurs determined to make California's olive oils as well-known as its wines. They dream of a time when good restaurants will offer lists of the state's best olive oils, for dipping bread or drizzling on foods, that will be identified by region and variety, like wines.

California's boutique olive oil industry was born in the wine country of Napa and Sonoma less than a decade ago. Ken Stutz, president of the California Olive Oil Council and himself a producer of gourmet oils, estimates that retail sales of the gourmet oils were more than $7 million last year. Those sales accounted for about 40 percent of the state's retail sales of olive oil, with the rest of the oil being made from table-olive rejects, and sold in bulk to restaurants.

But what started as a labor of love among the well-heeled is showing promise of becoming the state's next big gourmet export, says Paul Vossen, an agricultural consultant with the University of California, Davis.

"I think there is going to be a tremendous growth to it," Vossen says. "There will be a premium paid for California-produced olive oil."

Ten years ago, there were perhaps three California-label fine olive oils made in small batches. Today there are more than 50, pressed or extracted in more than 14 mills.

Many sell for prices competitive with fine regional olive oils imported from Italy, with an average retail price of about $30 for a 25.4 ounce bottle. But some of the California oils, such as B.R. Cohn Sonoma Estate, sell for $50 for 17 ounces in gourmet shops.

Most are labeled extra-virgin, although there are no regulations to govern what can or can't claim such status in California. Extra-virgin oils are cold-pressed—which means that only water, not heat or chemicals, is used to separate pulp from oil, preferably within 24 hours of harvesting. Green or gold, cloudy or clear, their tastes can range from sharp and peppery to buttery and sweet. The best always smell and taste of fresh olives.

UC Davis has planted six experimental sites to determine which varieties grow here, and is researching ways to lower production costs. The high cost of land in California, and the high cost of paying laborers to hand-pick olives, forces producers to charge high prices for their oils.

California olive oil production will remain little more than a hobby, says Louise Ferguson, another UC Davis olive expert, until producers are willing to develop mechanical harvesting, produce more than just top-of-the-line extra-virgin oils and invest in marketing.

"In Spain, the average person consumes 25 pounds of olive oil a year. Here, the average person consumes a couple of tablespoons. We have to somehow increase consumption in America," Ferguson says. "The producers have to create a cachet that will attract Joe Six-Pack."

Undaunted by economics, would-be oil makers have imported thousands of young trees from Spain and Italy in recent years. Those trees will start producing fruit in three to five years. Producers also are reclaiming thousands of neglected trees. UC Davis estimates that there are about 2,000 acres of mature trees not yet being harvested.

In the last decade, olive oil consumption has risen steadily among increasingly health-conscious American consumers. Olive oil is a cholesterol-free, mono-unsaturated fat. Such fats tend to lower levels of LDL cholesterol, so-called bad cholesterol, in the blood. (Elevated levels of LDL-cholesterol are associated with heart disease.) Also, the trees are easy to grow organically, and no chemicals are needed to extract the oil.



Grower holds young olives

In 1996-97, olive oil sales in the United States rose 31 percent over 1995-96 sales. The United States imports about 33 million gallons of olive oil annually, most of it from Italy and Spain.

"Californians looked around and said: Why does this only have to come from Italy?" says Darrell Corti of Corti Bros. Foods in Sacramento. "We can produce good olive oil here."

First to try making fine oil were vintners, many of whom had trees on their property. High land prices and the long lead time between planting and harvesting fruit suitable for pressing made it hard for any but the very rich to start from scratch as olive farmers.

"The California olive oil market is where the California fine wine market was in 1966, when there were few vineyards and few good wines made here," Corti says. Corti Bros. produces its own extra-virgin oil and markets 18 others—eight of them California labels.

The producers have been on a steep learning curve—turning to Spain and Italy for advice on pruning, irrigation, fertilization, cultivation, pressing and bottling. Results have been wildly uneven.

Corti says some of the California oil already is as good as some of the finest made in Europe. "And I've given some to European tasters who tried it and thought we were trying to poison them," he says.

Producers have formed the California Olive Oil Council in an effort to set standards. The organization, which started with a handful of enthusiasts, now has 300 members. The council awards extra-virgin status to oils that have been chemically tested for acidity, and blind tested by a tasting panel. Some 28 California labels now bear the council's seal, says Patricia Barragh, a spokeswoman for the association.

Charles Schetter planted 225 olive trees around his Pacific Palisades home in Southern California in 1992. This year, he sold his first commercial oil, Dodici Giardini Extra Virgin Olive Oil. It is the first Southern California extra-virgin to earn the Olive Oil Council's extra-virgin certification, Schetter says proudly.

"Once you start picking for oil, you become maniacal," says the business executive. He hauls his olives all the way to Napa the day they are harvested, to ensure a good press. Other oils are harvested from trees in the Central Valley, around Paso Robles, in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada.

Some producers, like McEvoy, are millionaires drawn to the almost mythical heritage of the world's oldest manufactured oil. Others, like Henwood, are business people. Still others are vintners who see oil as a natural complement to their primary product, wine.

"There are so many wineries out there, and consumers are trying to figure out which wine to buy," Vossen says. "If you have some excellent olive oil, the consumer might think your wine is good too, so selling the oil becomes a way to sell more wine."

Guiding a visitor around the rolling hills of her farm, where 11,000 young trees are carefully tended by an army of gardeners led by an Italian consultant who flies in several times a year, McEvoy explains that her multimillion-dollar investment in olive oil began as an accident.

The largest stockholder in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the newspaper her grandfather founded, McEvoy decided in her 70s to buy a rural retreat for herself and her grandchildren. Only after she bought 550 acres in Marin County in 1991, McEvoy says, did she discover that the property's agricultural zoning required her to farm the land before she could renovate any of its dilapidated structures. Cattle ranching was too hard, McEvoy says. Vineyards were too common.

"I didn't want to be the 5,900th person to put grapes in the ground. Everybody has done grapes. I just find making oil very exciting. I love the trees, I think they're beautiful. And it is a happy day when you finally press the oil and taste it and find that you have made something fine," McEvoy says.

She declines to say how much she has invested in her project so far, although an assistant says she spent $300,000 on her state-of-the-art Italian oil press, which extracts the oil through centrifugal force. But she says she wants to make it profitable, both to show that she can do it, and to make it more likely that her only son, Nion, will keep the business alive after she dies.

"I'm in this for the long-term," says the now 79-year-old McEvoy. An eight-ounce bottle of her sharp, peppery McEvoy Ranch extra-virgin retails for about $15.

Sitting on a broken irrigation pipe in his still seriously overgrown orchard, Henwood says it took him 20 years to figure out what to do with his trees. A settler from the East Coast first planted them in the rolling hills outside Marysville in 1880. Twice in this century, the orchard was abandoned. When Henwood's family bought the property in 1976, none of the 4,500 trees—some more than 20 feet tall—had been harvested since 1968.

"I started thinking about those olives then," he recalls. "I tried to make oil once, but I didn't know what I was doing. The press blew up in my face."

For nearly two decades, Henwood let the fruit fall on the ground and rot. Gradually, he could distinguish one tree from the other, and discovered that he had a half-dozen varieties of French, Italian and Spanish olives. Some trees had been grafted decades ago, and actually bore two varieties that ripened at different times.

A few years ago, with his children grown, the 52-year-old Henwood decided to try his hand at oil-making once more. In 1996, he tracked down a copy of the State Board of Horticulture's Annual Report for 1890, searching for clues to the origin of his trees. In it, he found a trove of practical advice on how to harvest and press olives.

"I basically followed their suggestions," Henwood says. "They really knew how to produce a fine oil."

Henwood and his wife, Peggy, press the oil within 24 hours of the olives' harvest. They made 650 gallons this year and have sold all but 150 gallons of it. His finest oil, a golden liquid called Henwood Estate, sells for $18.95 retail for a 17-ounce bottle.■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

AROUND TOWN

Amman Marriott sponsors SOS orphans

THE AMMAN Marriott, a leader in global hospitality, extended their services to those in need by sponsoring nine children from the SOS Children's Village Amman in Tareq. The sponsorship began on the 26 August for one year. In addition to the financial sponsorship, the Amman Marriott will be conducting regular activities with the children throughout the year at the Marriott, along with celebrating holidays and festivities.
The children will also be able to take part in a number of activities being held at the Marriott and they will also be exposed to the Hotel business as a possible career opportunity in their future endeavors.■



Martyn Standen, General Manager of the Amman Marriott Hotel, handing over a check to mama Fatima; the SOS mother of nine children.

The Circassians of Jordan

A legacy of survival through folkore

By Rasheed Al Roussan
Special to The Star

IN HUMANITY'S long journey of survival, cultures from all over the world evolved, leaving behind an unforgettable legacy of artistry, folklore and intellectuality. Today, one is tempted to dwell upon the ancient books of history, where secrets of past civilizations are yet unraveled. The biographies of these mystic cultures aren't only written in books and scriptures, they are celebrated by people who have garnished their history with songs and dances.

In the white chain of mountains in northwestern Caucasia, the echoes of songs and dances are still heard of, symbolizing the culture and heritage of Circassians. Today, their art has reached many countries, including Jordan, where they have touched our hearts with their folkloric elegance and beauty.

Al Ahli group has always been one of the cultural sights of Circassian folklore. Since its establishment in 1993, the group has presented various shows like the Circassian Song Festival and the Kingdom of Peace. This year is a special one. The 1998 Circassian Song Festival has held five nights of dazzling performances. The first three days where dedicated to the Circassian song mostly, in addition to the spectacular dances.

The show began with a dramatization of two famous myths about the Circassian knights: the Narts. One of the myths tells the story of a brave hero, Sosrouqa, who saves his people from the threat of a fearful beast called Yinij. Sosrouqa succeeds in trapping the beast in the sea and kills it, bringing back fire, which was monopolized by the beast.

Reading about it is exiting, but seeing it performed in front of you is yet another experience. The sudden entrance of the dancing warriors into the stage bewilders you immediately. The sound of their struts creates a grave atmosphere where they dance with dignity and vigor along with the music.





Tariq Al Mufti, *singer and dancer in* Al Ahli group says "The nature of the males' dances is tough and violent, which requires the dancer to be in excellent physical shape".

Another scene presents young men and women, all dancing with joy and happiness. The way the young women move their feet is similar to swans dancing on water.

Bervin Beesheh, the women's choreographer says that every dance carries a certain meaning. In relation to women, she states that the nature of their dances reflects the sensitive and dignified feminine side of the Circassian woman. In relation to the men's dances, Beesheh adds that there are many kinds. One of these is called Al Qafa, the dance of the princes. The performer uses his hand movements to imitate the wings of the eagle as a symbol of his strength and bravery.

"Islamé is another kind which requires fast movements showing the level of mastery in every dancer. In addition, a dance called Nbeerveh brings together men and women in a state of competition. Each gender tries to imitate the dances of the other" she goes on to say.

Tatum Khumush is responsible for the women's makeup. She has been very selective in this matter: "The makeup is simple and gaunt, I used natural colors to go with the natural beauty of the Circassian woman."

The tunes are of a magical magnitude, the varied beats and rhythms, the romantic melodies plus the wide range of pitches echoes the mountainous characteristics of musical expression.

The question of integrating the Circassian music in a modern musical pattern is a double-edged matter. **Lara Al Mufti** is among the artistic voices in the group who believes in the necessity of adding a modern touch into the Circassian song. However, for **Anas Matokh**, a dancer, this is not the case. He believes that adding modern music into folklore is inappropriate.

At the same time, Lara states that only musical elements like rhythm and tempo may be changed, the lyrics however stay the same. In addition, she states that the sounds of the accordion (Ibshina), and the drum (Barabaneh) are a must in every music, since they are parts of the Circassian folklore.

The stage production has served the show well. Although the decore facilities where limited, designer **Sharif Hilmi** has managed to make use of the RCC stage, where the group has performed. The decoration is changed instantly with every new story or dance. The stage directions of **Amer Dakhqan, Mira Janbeck** and **Samer Balqar**, plus the men's choreographer **Sulumbeck Islamov**, have created a fairy tale setting where voices of singers and dancers filled the place with majestic aroma.

Nevertheless, the show's purpose is not mere entertainment. The festival has tackled on a very important issue: the threatening future of the Circassian language. The major theme of the performance is to point out that the language, along with the cultural heritage are being ignored by the new generation of Circassians.

The crew in general has worked very hard on carrying out this message to the public, especially the Circassian society in the Kingdom. "The Circassian language is a musical and communicative language, which must be preserved. We should make our language more appealing to the young generation through folkloric songs and dances" Beesheh affirms.

Anas Matokh and Tariq Al Mufti agree that their generation hasn't been raised in a Circassian environment. They also agree that gatherings between young Circassians must be more often than ever, in order to practice the language with each other. The lack of Circassian language centers in Jordan is another dangerous factor, which must be solved.

The Circassian Song Festival is a vital step towards saving the Circassian language. The young are voluntarily contributing to their cultural heritage by taking part in the celebration of their history.

At the end, language is the bridge where culture and folklore are interwoven together, and if we tend to forget that, we could end up as victims of a forgotten past, and an unknown future.■

Talented Trio

Festival of Iraqi arts in Amman



Some of the works of Ezzat

By Kofi Atta
Special to The Star

STRUGGLING TO maintain their past glory and rich cultural heritage, Iraqi artists are showing their ingenuity by looking to the past to produce innovative creations. No one recognizes the value and the beauty of this rich cultural heritage better than the three Iraqi artists—**Amin Abass**, painter, **Khalid Ezzat**, sculptor, and **Kadham Ghanam**, ceramic artist, all teachers at the Institute of Fine Art in Baghdad, who are currently exhibiting their work at the 10-day Iraqi arts festival at the Burun Gallery of Fine Arts, Swefiya.

Unusually, the festival has no name. This is to allow visitors to appreciate and guess what it's all about themselves.

It consists of three distinct parts, a painting exhibition built around an oriental wall presenting past and present Iraqi philosophy and a vision of life; elegant ceramic works representing both the ancient and contemporary Arab-Iraqi world; and spectacular bronze sculptures.



Ceramics in style

Abass' 15 paintings are displayed on the ground floor of the gallery and are crammed with new visions and inspirations. Painting number 1, aptly named "Old Doors", is of an old door with inscriptions and designs in red, blue and yellow. The symbol of an eye at the top left corner of the work represents the future and hope for all people in bondage. Abass' most popular work is exhibit no. 13, the biggest and most outstanding painting that represents the thoughts of the Iraqi people and their perceptions of life.

Amin Abass was born in Babil city, Iraq, in 1943. He graduated from the Babil School of Ceramics and Fine Arts and has participated in several exhibitions with other Iraqi artists both at home and abroad.

The first floor of the gallery hosts the works of Khalid Ezzat which echo the unheard voices of the Iraqi people. Though his exhibition features only six pieces (all in bronze except one piece in wood), all are abstracts of Iraq's history. Sculpture no. 3, for example is of a man kissing a woman, and clearly symbolises love and joy—the happier image of a lost era. Another sculpture shows an Iraqi woman carrying a baby. "Women are vital and indispensable to our day to day life," Khalid stresses.

In contrast, a sculptured cow represents the religious side of life, praising Allah for his bountifulness and mercy. Khalid's works are simple but take the visitor to a world where the soul is free. Some of his works can be found at Midan Shatra and in other parts of Basra city in Iraq. Khalid graduated from the Institute of Fine Arts, Basra, in 1960 and also studied at the Academy of Sculpture in 1963.

Kadham Ghanam's ceramic work dominates the first floor of the gallery. The 13 exhibits are masterpieces of old and new techiques in ceramic art and are almost indisputably among the best artistic innovations of his generation. Each tells a particular tale, which teases and is often difficult to decipher but which makes a real impact on the viewer.

"Ceramic art is like a jigger worm, if it gets under your skin and into your blood you can never get it out," says Ghanam' of his chosen medium.



Visions by Abbas

The driving message of his work is about the reality of life and religious indoctrination. Extraordinary calligraphy of some verses of the holy Koran soothes the mind, particularly the work bearing the inscription "Bismilaa Rahman Al rahim" (In the name of God the gracious and the merciful).

Ghanam was born in Baghdad in 1944 and graduated from the Baghdad Academy of Fine Art in 1967.

The Iraqi arts festival runs till 9 September at the Burun gallery, near Boston Fried Chicken, Swefiya, Amman, and is open daily from 10am-6pm.■

AGENDA

Exhibitions

■ *Paintings by 18 artists from Egypt, Syria, Iraq Palestine and Lebanon at the Al Mashriq Gallery, Shimisani. It continues till 1 November.*

■ An art exhibition by **Rula Shukairy** at the French Cultural Center will start on 1 September. The exhibit deals with the phenomenon of light as one of the most important issues of life. The event ends 30 September.

■ Geneviéve Hofman made a survey for French artists and their sites in Paris, as the 20th century goes by. Starting on 9 September, her exhibition of 69 photographs and artworks will be shown at the Jordan's Plastic Artists' Association in Jebel Weibdeh. It runs till 30 September.

■ The relations between man and nature is an exhibition that is currently running at the **Orient Gallery** in Shmeisani. The exhibit, displaying the works of artists from various Arab countries ends 10 September.

■ The summer '98 exhibition continues at Darat Al Funoon: This is an annual exhibition of arts and graphics from different Arab artists. Besides the art exhibit, there is different lectures on art that is going almost everyday.



Rula Shukairy

■ Exhibition of wrought iron furniture by Jordanian artist **Saleem Bandak** at Al Baydar Hall in Kan Zaman village. It continues till 17 September.

Films

■ **ET**, a science fiction movie, starring Dee Wallace and Drew Barrymore, is showing at the American Center on Thursday 10 September at 5 pm.

The Star's GUIDE TV

Programs on JTV from 5 — 11 September

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY
3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Postman Pat (Cartoon)
3:30—Clowning Around
4:00—Neighbors (Drama)
4:30—Scandi Nature (Doc.)
5:00—French Prog.
6:00—Acapulco Bay
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Prog.
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—You Bet Your Life
8:00—Cinema, Cinema
8:30—Prism (Talk Show)
9:10—Sirens (Drama)
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—*Film:* Distant Cousins
12:00—Country Music

SUNDAY
3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Pink Panther (Cart.)
3:20—Pumpkin Patch
3:30—The Adventures of the Black Stallion
4:00—American Chart Show
5:00—NBA
6:00—French Program
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Life's Most Embarrassing Moments
8:00—People Count
8:30—Challenges
9:00—Renegade (Drama)
10:00—News in English
10:30—Pandoras Clock (Mini Series, Part 1)

MONDAY
3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Highlander (Cartoon)
3:30—The Genie from Down Under (Drama)
4:00—Neighbors (Drama)
4:30—Last Frontiers (Doc.)
5:00—French Program
6:00—Sea Quest
7:00—News in French



NBA Games, Sunday at 5:00 pm.

7:15—French Program
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Hope & Gloria
8:00—Perspective
8:30—What's your poison?
9.10—Good Guys, Bad Guys
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Pandoras Clock (Part 2)

TUESDAY
3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—The Pink Panther
3:30—Small Talk (Quiz)
4:00—Neighbors
4:30—Life Choices (Doc.)
5:00—Royal Blood (Doc.)
6:00—French Program
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Program
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Step by Step
8:00—What Would You Do?
8:30—Encounter
9:10—An Independent Man (Mini Series, Part 6)
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Lonesome Dove
12:00—*Film:* Fugitive Among Us

WEDNESDAY
3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin
3:30—Halfway Across The Galaxy & Turn Left
4:00—The Album Show
5:00—French Program
6:15—Sea Quest
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Program
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Keeping Mum (Com.)
8:00—Envoy Special
8:30—Computer Chronicles
9:10—Kung- Fu
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Chicago Hope
12:00—Bugs (Drama)

THURSDAY
3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Animated Hero Classics (Cartoon)
3:30—Animal Park(Cartoon)
4:00—L'Ecole Des Fans
4:30—Blue Water Dreaming (Documentary)
5:00—NBA Games
6:15—Sliders
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Prog.
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Family Matters
8:00—Great Romances of the 20th Century
8:30—Dr Quinn Medicine Woman (Drama)
9:10—Oprah Winfrey
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—*Film:* Color of Money
12:00—Can't Hurry Love

FRIDAY
3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin (Cartoon)
3:30—The Borrowers
4:00—Film: Blood River
6:15—Les Cles De Fort Boyard (Quiz)
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Prog.
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Fresh Prince of Bel Air
8:00—Life on the Digital Edge
8:30—The Seven Wonders of the World
9:10—Babylon 5
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—The X Files (Drama)
12:00—Big Sky (Drama)

PROGRAMMES EN FRAN AIS
SAMEDI
17:00—Faut pas rêver
19:00—Le journal
19:15—Magazine L'œuf de Colomb

DIMANCHE
18:00—Bonne espérance
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—E=M6

LUNDI
17:00—Thalassâ
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine scientifique

MARDI
18:00—Les coeurs brûlés
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Fractales

MERCREDI
17:00—Ushuaïa
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—E=M6
20:00—Envoyé spécial

JEUDI
16:00—L'école des fans
19:00—Le journal
19:15—Magazine L'œuf de Colomb

VENDREDI
18:15—Fort Boyard
19:00—Le journal
19:15—Allô la Terre

Programs are subject to change by JTV

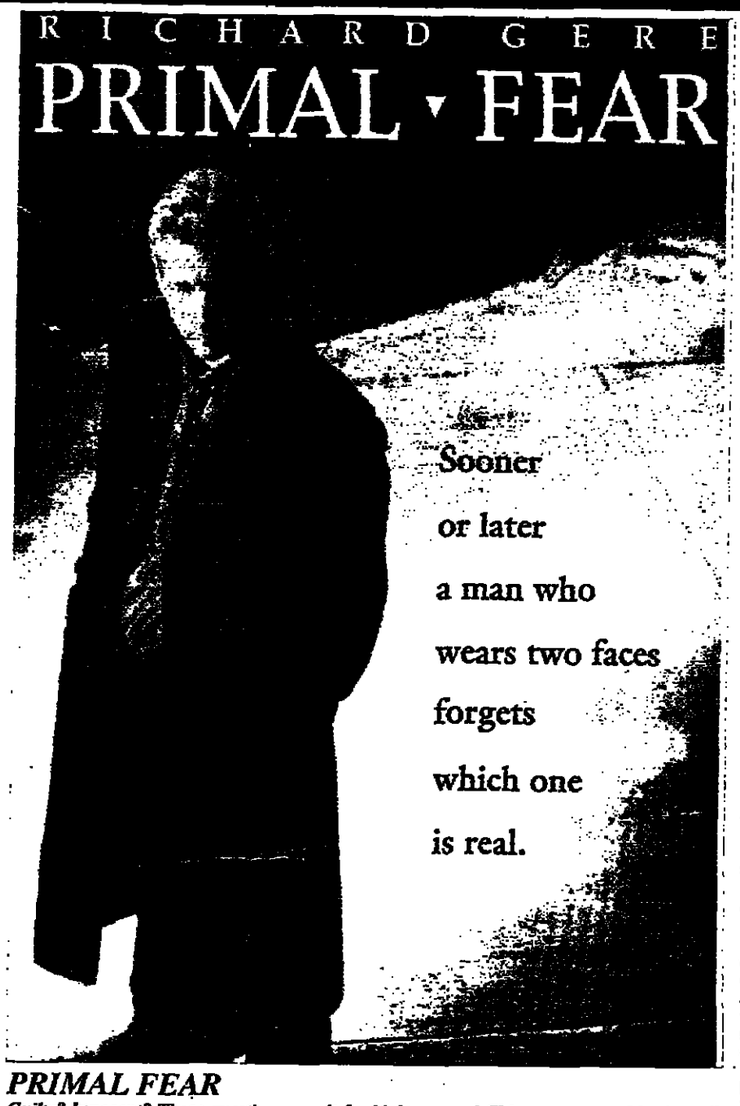
Amman cinemas

- **Philadelphia I (Tel: 4634149):** Deep Impact '
- **Philadelphia II (Tel:4634149):** The Man In The Iron Mask
- **Galleria I (Tel: 079 33430):** Godzilla
- **Galleria II (Tel: 079 33430):** City Of Angels
- **Plaza (Tel: 5699238):** Al Za'eem *(Arabic)*
- **Concord I (Tel: 5677420):** Contact
- **Concord II (Tel: 5677420):** Up Close & Personal

FILM

RICHARD GERE

PRIMAL FEAR

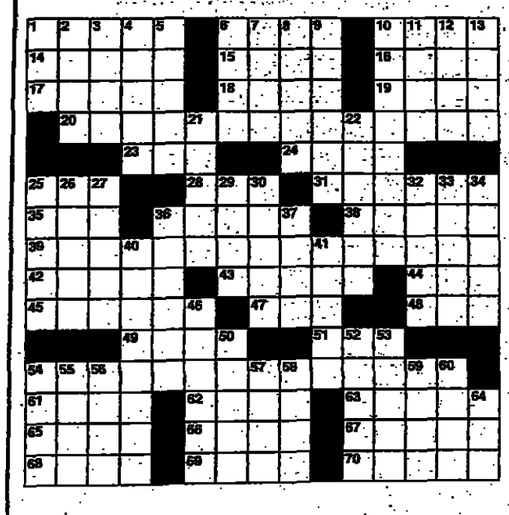


PRIMAL FEAR

Guilty? Innocent? Those questions aren't for high-powered Chicago attorney Martin Vail (Richard Gere) to decide. His job is to defend, especially if a case will put his name in the headlines and further his career. When Vail hears that a penniless altar boy (Edward Norton) is accused of murdering the local Archbishop, he snaps up the case, eager for the media spotlight. Little does he know that it will uncover a viper's nest of corruption, pit him against a prosecutor (Laura Linney) who is his ex-lover, and test all his skill, and judgement.

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ACROSS
1 Equal
6 Tab
10 Ogden the poet
14 Without _ in the world
15 Put aboard ship
16 Member of the orchestra
17 Fudd of cartoons
18 Opera tune
19 Walked heavily
20 Path to success?
23 Holy woman: abbr.
24 Weight allowance
25 Boastful talk
28 Liquid meas.
31 Rio _
35 Somewhat: suff.
36 Certain horse
38 Expend
39 Not too bright
42 Upstanding
43 What ghosts do
44 "Lighthorse Harry"
45 Fugitive
47 Tachometer letters
48 Feminine suffix
49 Joint
51 Residue
54 Bakery item
61 Laborer
62 Have a meal
63 Print size
65 Wrongful act
66 Shroyer of TV
67 Carries on
68 Aware of
69 Small weapon
70 Whim

DOWN
1 Murray of old films
2 Lawyers' gp.
3 Press down
4 Work gangs
5 City in Afghanistan
6 Attired
7 Injure
8 Simp
9 Pekoe holder
10 Last, but _
11 Dugout
12 Chimney stuff
13 Ms. Laman
21 Lear's daughter
22 "Burst violently
25 Thingamajig
26 "_Jady known _" (Service)
27 Rudely brief
29 Pituitary hormone
30 Composer Franz
32 Greasy of football fame
33 Fists
34 Flaunts
36 _China (pig)
37 Enlist again
40 "_ my parlor," said the spider_
41 Deprive of courage
46 Tended to a garden
50 MN city
52 Neck piece
53 "_ the Horrible" (cartoon)
54 Prepared for
55 Laborer
58 Cull
57 _ about (approximately)
58 Occident
59 "Citizen _"
60 Musical James
64 Northern native: abbr.

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—This Week's— HOROSCOPES

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: The sun's in Virgo all week long, helping us all stay organized.

Aries (March 21-April 19). Work as if your life depended on it and you might push up to the next level.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Finish up old projects and start new ones. You're on a roll. Just about everything you touch will turn to gold.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Learn how to provide what you need for your home. It'll be relatively easy and just about the only way you'll get what you really want.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). A partner has interesting things to tell you. You can learn a lot if you listen and take notes.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). There's no time for anything but work. The good news is that money is pouring into your coffers. A partner wants attention.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Your luck in love is excellent. You might even be inspired to make a forever commitment or up the ante on the one you've got.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Get your friends to help with a household project. Conditions are great for taking things apart and putting them back together again.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You're sharp as a tack. Learn by working with a person who knows what he or she is doing. If you pay close attention, you can use the skills on your own.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Money is your major focus, where to get it and how to spend it. Use your brains plus something you have at home to make a trade.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Finish old business first, then set your new plans into action. You're awesome. You have the luck, the wits and the experience to make something fabulous happen.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb 18). The pressure increases. Get used to it. It'll get you into good shape for when you should push hard to get what you want.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). Your friends are really there for you. Their advice can teach you how to achieve a mutual goal.

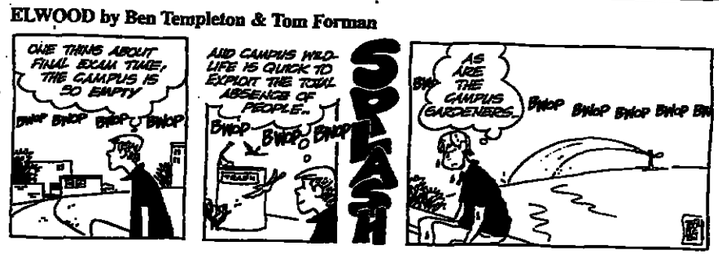
If You're Having a Birthday This Week: Love's on your agenda this year. By now you should have a clue as to who.

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PERKY & BEANZ by Russell Myers

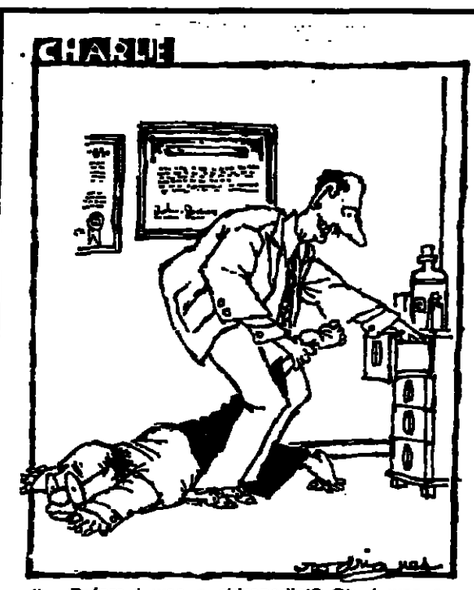


ELWOOD by Ben Templeton & Tom Forman



CATFISH by Fred Wagner & Tom Cone





"...Before I was a chiropodist? Oh, I was a blacksmith."

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Jumble

Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

NALTS

ZISEE

SILCHE

YUNASE



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here:

Answers: SLANT SEIZE CHISEL UNEASY

Answer: The successful perfume maker had — SCENTS SENSE

Words of Wisdom

Contempt is what we feel for those things that we cannot have.

• • •

The more people talk about themselves, the more likely they are to lie.

• • •

The most difficult part of marriage is to remain silent when you know you're in the right.

• • •

Always demand more from yourself than anyone demands of you.

• • •

Resolve to worry less and enjoy life more, because it is rare to remember next week what you're worrying about today.

• • •

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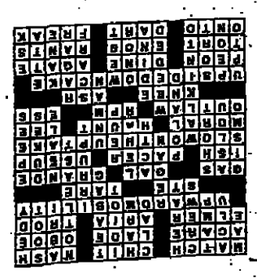
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SOLUTION:



Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Les bonnes résolutions de la bourse d'Amman

● *La bourse d'Amman léthargique depuis des mois, pourrait retrouver un peu de tonus et acquérir une dimension internationale avec la mise en place de nouvelles réglementations et d'un système électronique de transactions et de liquidation. Entrées en vigueur cette semaine, ces nouvelles réglementations pourraient multiplier par trois le montant quotidien des transactions, actuellement limité à 3 millions de dollars.* «L'obligation pour les sociétés cotées de fournir des informations financières et comptables selon les normes internationales va consolider le marché et y amener plus de monde», *estime Michel Marto, le nouveau ministre des Finances. Les données qui devront être fournies tous les trimestres* «vont donner au marché des bases solides dans le domaine de la transparence et accroître la confiance tout en étant un facteur d'expansion et de croissance», *estime le ministre. Le directeur général-adjoint de la société de consultants Pearl Consulting d'Amman, Mohammed Abdallah, ne partage pas l'optimisme de M. Marto.* «Un simple changement de l'environnement de travail n'aura pas d'effet sur le marché», *analyse le consultant pour qui la déprime actuelle du marché est surtout liée à la tension régionale :* «Si vous ne changez pas l'environnement politique et économique, rien d'autre n'aura d'impact réel».

C'est la vie

L'agenda français d'Amman

Exposition

Rula Shukairy, peintre abstrait jordanien, revient au Centre culturel français pour nous présenter ses dernières créations. **Jusqu'au 30 septembre au CCF.**

Cinéma

Cycle Portraits de femmes.
Gervaise, film de René Clément (1955), noir et blanc, sous-titré en arabe. Gervaise, une blanchisseuse qui élève ses enfants seule, épouse un ouvrier. Celui-ci, victime d'un accident du travail, se met à boire... **Séances au Centre culturel français le lundi 7 septembre à 18h30 et 20h30.**

Éclaboussures

Stop aux annonces tartuffes !

Les quotidiens jordaniens devraient souhaiter des changements plus fréquents de cabinet, non pas pour des raisons politiques, mais financières !

Une semaine après la formation du nouveau gouvernement de Fayez Tarawneh (le 20 août dernier), des dizaines de petites annonces élogieuses ont rempli chaque jour des pages entières des journaux. En additionnant les recettes induites, les responsables de la publicité ont dû se frotter les mains.

Mais qui est à l'origine de ces annonces? Pourquoi tant d'enthousiasme?

Sans doute le réseau de relations sociales, économiques et humaines des ministres a son importance. En dehors de la famille ou des amis de l'intéressé, les annonces peuvent tout aussi bien provenir des tribus, des groupes ethniques (Tcherkesses, Circassiens...), des régions du ministre, des milieux économiques, des entreprises, des associations sportives, des groupes d'intérêt, etc.

Les objectifs des annonceurs sont eux aussi variables : la famille exprime sa fierté à l'égard du fils prodige, une association de diplômés des universités américaines félicite leur brillant ancien élève, ou encore une compagnie de cosmétiques et des agences de voyage souhaitent respectivement la bienvenue au nouveau ministre de la Santé et au ministre du Voyage et du Tourisme. Bien entendu, dans les deux derniers cas, il s'agit d'un message intéressé : une annonce bien sentie, c'est *un bon coup de pub* pour l'entreprise émettrice.

D'importance variable, une demi-page à un simple encadré, le phénomène est devenu excessif. Certains pourront y regretter une montée de l'hypocrisie capitaliste - un homme d'affaires et ancien ministre a appelé dimanche dernier à interrompre ces manifestations. Pourtant, elles constituent une habitude indécrottable dès qu'un remaniement ministériel a lieu.

Comment mettre fin à ces comportements obséquieux de Cour ?

Les ministres pourraient en faire la demande eux-mêmes, en appelant les citoyens à employer leur argent à des fins plus utiles. Ce fut le cas d'un ministre palestinien le mois dernier, mais étrangement, un des quotidiens a refusé de publier son appel au bon sens en le traitant de... démagogue!

On peut également imaginer une prise de conscience des Jordaniens qui, sous l'influence des associations sociales de bienfaisance, changeraient d'attitude en consacrant leurs deniers à des œuvres de charité.

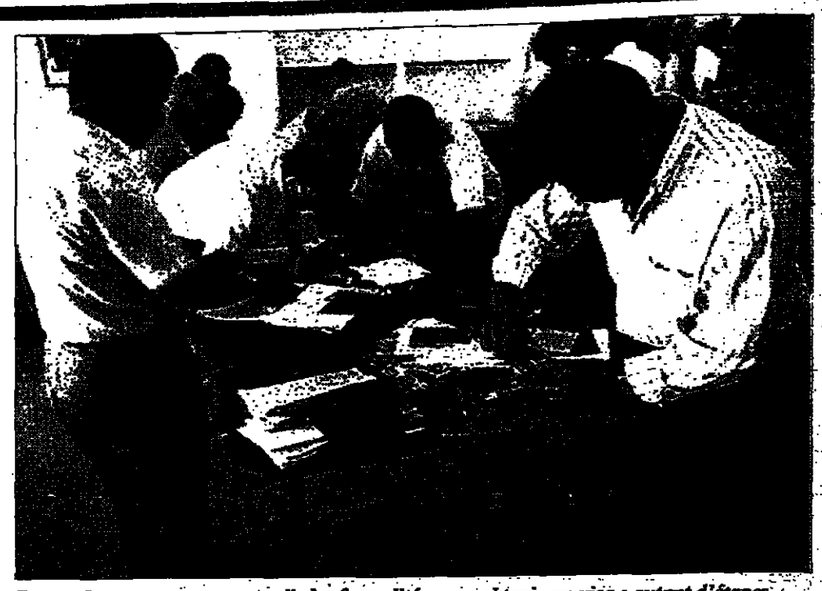
Enfin, un simple coup de téléphone ne suffit-il pas pour féliciter, sans arrière-pensée, un ministre ? ■

Suleiman Sweiss

Société

Femmes plus près des frontières

Elles peuvent désormais faire librement la demande de leur passeport. La loi a été saluée par tous mais risque de se heurter aux traditions. Témoignages partagés entre espoir et doute.



Demander un passeport, remplir les formalités pour obtenir un visa : autant d'étapes administratives qui étaient jusqu'à présent le domaine réservé des hommes.

«Il m'a confisqué mon passeport»

Marta ne peut sortir de Jordanie, tout simplement parce que son mari jordanien ne veut pas. Il lui a confisqué son passeport colombien. Elle vit ici depuis 25 ans et sa maison de Ruseifa est sa prison, sans aucune issue possible : *«Même si je récupérais mon passeport, je ne pourrais pas partir car, en tant qu'étrangère, je dois payer une taxe de sortie et je n'ai pas l'argent pour ça. J'ai bien essayé d'obtenir la nationalité jordanienne mais les autorités m'ont alors demandé l'accord de mon mari».*



À Zarka, Paola évoque une de ses amies tyrannisée par son époux : *«Battue régulièrement, elle devait rester cloîtrée chez elle, son mari lui avait pris son passeport péruvien pour l'obliger à rester avec lui».*

Venues en Jordanie avec le rêve de construire une famille dans un pays à découvrir, ces femmes étrangères vivent une désillusion dramatique, comme l'explique Maria, une autre Colombienne, jointe par téléphone : *«Je me suis mariée avec cet homme dans mon pays, je fus très surprise en arrivant en Jordanie de constater qu'il avait déjà deux femmes avec chacune leur chambre et leurs enfants. À moi aussi, il m'a donné une chambre. Le choc fut terrible. Depuis, il me frappe dès que je proteste et garde mon passeport pour m'empêcher de fuir».* Ces unes témoignages effroyables (les prénoms ont été modifiés pour respecter l'anonymat des personnes interrogées) ne peuvent, bien entendu, former une généralité. Loin de là. Mais ils font tout de même écho à la situation de la femme en Jordanie. ■

A. I.

Vennes en Jordanie avec le rêve de construire une famille dans un pays à défemme au foyer sans illusions.

L'avocate Amal est plus optimiste et si elle trouve *«regrettable d'avoir attendu si longtemps pour réparer une telle injustice, elle pense que la nouvelle loi peut ouvrir les yeux de la communauté internationale sur la situation des femmes dans le Tiers-Monde».*

Pour sa part, Basma craint la multiplication de comportements débridés : *«Les femmes ne sont pas préparées à cette liberté».* Et la mère de famille de citer en exemple sa sœur, qui a joué les filles de l'air en Égypte avec un inconnu.

Autre obstacle de taille : l'argent. *«Dans notre société, l'homme décide de tout depuis des générations,* analyse Hiba, qui, tawjihi en poche, a la tête sur les épaules, *le passeport n'est qu'un papier qui restera dans un tiroir. Étant financièrement dépendante de mon père, je ne pourrais pas partir en vacances avec une amie sans son autorisation».* Dans le même sens, Sausan, qui, malgré ses 23 ans, ne bouge pas de chez elle, croit qu'une infime partie des femmes, celles qui travaillent et peuvent obtenir leur indépendance, profitera de cette loi. Les autres resteront soumises et ne sauront échapper au carcan des traditions.

Enfin précisons que cette nouvelle loi n'autorise pas la femme à sortir avec ses enfants de Jordanie, à moins d'avoir sur elle une autorisation écrite du mari. C'est une condition que l'on retrouve un peu partout dans le monde, aussi bien en Amérique Latine qu'en France. ■

Amineh Ishtay



Le Moyen-Orient dans la presse française

Dialoguer avec Téhéran : un pari audacieux



Depuis que Mohammad Khatami est arrivé au pouvoir, une brise de liberté souffle sur l'Iran, qui tente de reprendre des relations diplomatiques plus sereines avec l'Occident. La France est l'un des premiers États à tendre la main à la République islamique.

Après la visite du ministre des Affaires Étrangères français à Téhéran et l'invitation lancée par la France au Président Mohammad Khatami, *Le Monde* (sélection hebdomadaire) évoque un *«désir de changement qualitatif dans les relations franco-iraniennes»* dans son éditorial *«Dialoguer avec Téhéran».* Analysant cette évolution par *«les échecs politiques, économiques et idéologiques et la population jeune rétive à l'embrigadement et l'isolement»,* il rappelle que *«le temps n'est pas loin où les pays occidentaux et certains musulmans étaient résolus à tenir la République islamique à distance».* Le quotidien qualifie le pari français d'*«audacieux»* dans la mesure où rien n'est joué en Iran : *«L'hétérogénéité du camp présidentiel -qui groupe, côte à côte, plus qu'il ne les rassemble, libéraux, partisans d'une économie assistée, jeunes et femmes en mal de libertés et de mieux-vivre- handicape M. Khatami, par ailleurs prisonnier d'un cadre constitutionnel qui limite les pouvoirs».*

Dans son édition des deux derniers mois, *Arabies* a consacré un article sur l'accord entre Abu Dhabi et les États-Unis portant sur l'achat de 80 avions américains F-16 C/D Block 60. *«En décrochant le plus gros contrat avec les autorités des Émirats Arabes Unis (EAU), les USA effectuent un spectaculaire come-back militaire et politique dans un pays où certes, ils sont liés par un accord de défense, mais dont le marché leur échappait en grande partie»,* commente-t-on.

Cependant, les EAU ont eu des exigences spécifiques comme l'équipement du missile Amraam. Selon l'article, *«l'aval du Congrès où les partisans d'Israël sont très puissants, sera nécessaire pour la concrétisation de l'accord. On peut donc s'attendre à un bras de fer entre l'administration Clinton, appuyée par l'industrie de Défense, et les députés».*

«Moyen-Orient : la bombe à retardement est enclenchée». Le magazine français *France-Pays arabes* utilise le même titre que le *New York Times*, dans son édition d'août-septembre. Le journaliste évoque *«l'intention annoncée par Arafat de proclamer un État palestinien en Mai 1999» : «Le fait que cette annonce ait été reçue comme un évènement dramatique par l'administration américaine est un signe de plus de la dérive et de l'aliénation de sa diplomatie au Proche-Orient, par le soutien inconditionnel-garanti par la vigilance d'un puissant lobby- à un État Hébreu (...) hostile à la création d'un État palestinien qui torpillerait sa stratégie de colonisation. Le problème n'est plus de maintenir en vie un processus devenu une coquille vide, mais de sauver la paix elle-même».* ■

Revue de presse réalisée par Nahed Al-Khlouf

Portrait

L'homme qui ne voulait pas se taire

Nahed Hattar, journaliste, politicien, a des opinions et un défaut : celui de savoir les exprimer. Agressé il y a presque un mois par des inconnus, il a failli y passer. Aujourd'hui il se sent mieux, même s'il est toujours hospitalisé, et se dit prêt à reprendre sa plume.

La presse du jour est posée sur le lit. Nahed Hattar ne l'a pas encore ouverte. Mais il finira bien par trouver les forces de lire les dernières nouvelles. En tant que journaliste, même cloué sur un lit d'hôpital, il se doit de rester en contact avec l'actualité. Et puis aujourd'hui, il a le sourire. Ses médecins viennent de lui annoncer qu'il allait enfin pouvoir quitter le service des soins intensifs. Nahed Hattar va mieux, beaucoup mieux. N'en déplaise à ses opposants. *«Je n'abandonnerai pas mes idées et le message que j'ai à délivrer,* insiste-t-il avec la *conviction que sa faiblesse* physique lui permet, *la première fois que j'ai été arrêté, j'avais 16 ans».* Il en a aujourd'hui 38.

Nahed Hattar souhaite donc, dès qu'il aura recouvré la totalité de ses forces, reprendre ses écrits. Des écrits sans concession dans lesquels il défend des positions tranchées : contre la normalisation avec Israël, qu'il considère comme *«un État raciste»,* contre les mesures économiques imposées par le Fonds Monétaire International (FMI) - du Parti communiste dont il a été membre, il a gardé les idéaux marxistes-léninistes -, contre la création d'une patrie palestinienne en Jordanie et contre les lois liberticides. Bref, autant de sujets sensibles sur lesquels l'homme a des idées bien arrêtées, autant de moyens de s'attirer des ennemis sinon des inimitiés. Entre Karim Kabariti, qui avait menacé publiquement de *«lui casser la tête»,* alors qu'il était Premier ministre, et une partie de l'opposition qui n'apprécie pas son discours radical sur la question palestinienne, Hattar est un personnage de la scène politique jordanienne *«qui sent le soufre»,* selon l'expression d'un expert.

Origine chimique

En novembre dernier, il s'était présenté aux élections législatives dans la circonscription de Balqa (siège chrétien) avec le soutien de Toujan Faisal, autre figure haute en couleurs.

En outre, Nahed Hattar ne se contente pas de quelques éditoriaux dans l'hebdomadaire *Al-Mithaq* (La Charte), dont il est le directeur de publication. Il envoie régulièrement ses productions au-delà des frontières du royaume. Quelques temps avant d'être attaqué, il avait ainsi écrit dans le journal libanais de gauche *Al-Safir,* une série de trois articles sur l'état politico-économique de la Jordanie. Et bien entendu, le contenu ne ressemblait pas à un plaidoyer *pro domo.* Était-ce là un bâton suffisant pour qu'il se fasse battre ? Rien ne permet de l'affirmer. Toujours est-il que le soir du 8 août, alors qu'il rentrait chez lui à djebel Hussein avec sa femme et l'un de ses deux enfants, il a été violemment agressé par quatre inconnus. Tout s'est passé très vite. Les assaillants connaissaient leur cible. Seul Nahed a été touché, recevant *sept coups féroces* dont deux à la tête. Les agresseurs ont opéré avec des bâtons. Le journaliste a aussitôt été transporté dans un hôpital d'Amman pour y faire soigner ses multiples contusions.

Dix jours plus tard, il subissait deux infarctus intestinaux et devait être opéré à deux reprises en moins d'une semaine. Près de deux mètres de l'intestin grêle nécrosé lui ont été retirés. Les médecins n'ont pas caché leur étonnement devant cette succession d'infarctus, à une date si éloi-gnée de l'agression.

«Juges honnêtes»

S'ils n'écartent pas la cause traumatologique pour expliquer le phénomène, ils envisagent également d'autres raisons : l'un des médecins a même parlé d'une possible origine chimique. Un produit aurait alors été administré à Hattar par le biais des armes utilisées. Les bâtons n'étaient-ils pas équipés de fines aiguilles dont on note encore la marque rétrécie sur le cuir chevelu ?

Quoi qu'il en soit, Nahed Hattar l'a échappé belle. Jamais il n'était passé aussi près de la mort en vingt ans de militantisme. Arrêté et jugé 17 fois par les services de sécurité, *«aucune sanction n'a été prise contre moi selon les voies judiciaires légales,* affirme-t-il, *car en Jordanie, les juges sont honnêtes et indépendants».*

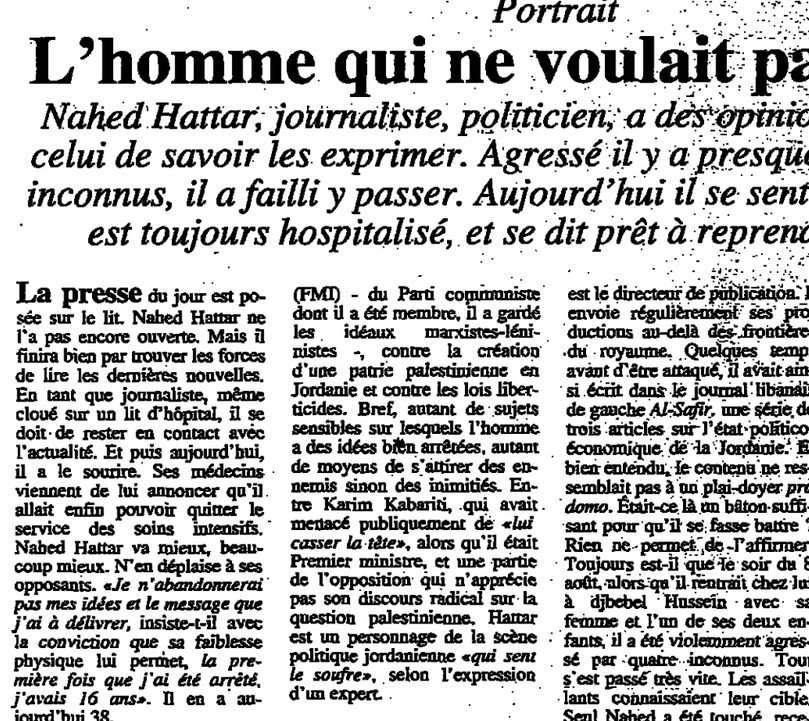
Selon le journaliste, *«il ne restait plus aux services de sécurité qu'à en finir avec* [lui] *de façon brutale, comme pour un bandit, au moyen d'une opération où aucune responsabilité directe n'est engagée».*

Près d'un mois après, l'enquête ne semble rien donner, malgré la pression exercée auprès du roi Hussein, notamment par l'association française Reporters sans frontières.

Son cas aura au moins eu le mérite d'attirer l'attention internationale sur la sécurité encore fragile des journalistes en Jordanie.

En attendant de sortir de l'hôpital, Nahed Hattar, grosses lunettes d'écailles noires sur le nez, lit les articles de ses confrères, avec sans doute la distance de celui qui est revenu de loin. Mais à peine remis de ses opérations successives, comme un encéphalogramme plat qui reprend rythme, il ose encore une première analyse sur le nouveau gouvernement, mené par Fayez Tarawneh : *«Ce qui compte, c'est de changer de style, de changer la façon de faire avec le peuple».* Nahed Hattar n'a pas dit son dernier mot. ■

Le Jourdain



Nahed Hattar, sur son lit d'hôpital, quelques jours avant de quitter le service des soins intensifs. Le journaliste a reçu sept coups violents dont deux à la tête.

Retrouvez le Jourdain **chaque jeudi**

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STAR ON LINE
http://star.arabia.com

Le Jourdain est dans la place



De beaux porte-documents de cuir rouge pour une convention. Bernard Bajolet, ambassadeur de France en Jordanie, et Nabil el-Shérif, rédacteur en chef du* Doustour *ont signé la semaine dernière un accord de coopération technique. Au cœur de cette coopération, le* Jourdain, *le supplément en français du* Star, *permet à des Jordaniens, outre de pratiquer leur français, de se former au journalisme, et compte sur un développement ultérieur.

Les mots de la semaine

«ESCLAVE et CRÉTIN»

Les formations dérivées des noms de peuples où de pays sont en général transparentes : **franciser**, donner une forme française à un mot ou plus globalement rendre français ; **américanisme**, imitation du mode de vie américain ou ensemble des études concernant les peuples autochtones d'Amérique ; **sinologue**, spécialiste de l'histoire et de la culture chinoise... Mais qui se souvient qu'**esclave** vient de **slave** ? Là, le rapport est plus subtile, par l'intermédiaire du latin médiéval **slavus**, auquel le français a ajouté un **e-** impulsif (comme dans **espérer** qui vient de **sperare**) et une gutturale **-c-** probablement d'origine germanique. Dépouillé de ces ajouts, le mot apparaît très proche de son origine dans l'anglais **slavery**, esclavage. En fait, dans l'Antiquité, les Grecs, les Romains puis les Germains ont réduit nombre de Slaves en esclavage : voilà l'explication historique.

Autre formation insoupçonnée : **synchrétisme**, combinaison de doctrines ou de systèmes différents, *signifie littéralement en grec,* coalition de Crétois (syn- en grec, avec, ensemble). Dans les temps antiques, encore une fois, les Crétois, bien que déchirés par de perpétuelles querelles intestines, savaient se tenir les coudes lorsqu'il fallait faire face à un ennemi commun. Autrement dit, ils n'étaient pas **crétins**. Avec ce dernier terme, **synchrétisme** n'a rien à voir puisque **crétin** est étymologiquement une variante de **chrétien**. Ce sont les Suisses et plus précisément les Valaisans *qui, dans le patois de montagne, ont opéré cette transformation* et dégradé l'innocence du chrétien en imbécilité. Depuis, ce terme a produit un dérivé très spécialisé : le **crétinisme** est une forme de débilité mentale et de dégénérescence physique en rapport avec une insuffisance thyroïdienne ! ■

Véronique Abu-Nijmeh

Espionnage

S. A. S. à Amman, S. O. S. pour la littérature

Le monde selon Gérard de Villiers est d'une simplicité consternante. Manichéens à souhait, ses romans d'espionnage sous le label S. A. S., mélange «subtil» de sexe et de violence, connaissent le succès en France. Dans sa dernière livraison,* La Peste noire de Bagdad *(1), Amman est pour la troisième fois le terrain de jeu de la gentille C. I. A. et des méchants terroristes arabes.

Gérard de Villiers est un remarquable écrivain français qui se joue des paradoxes. Il ne connaît pas l'angoisse de la page blanche et vit de sa plume, grassement. Il ne publie pourtant pas chez Gallimard, et n'a jamais la faveur des critiques. Il s'édite même à «compte d'auteur» : Villiers publié aux éditions... Gérard de Villiers.

Mais depuis bientôt trente ans, cet homme a renoncé à l'art pour mieux s'affirmer comme l'un des champions de la catégorie des faiseurs, des professionnels de l'édition ; un pisse-copie capable de sortir, incontinent, un roman tous les trois mois, avec un succès jamais démenti. Baron du roman de gare et de supermarché, Villiers est le Barbara Cartland franchouillard des représentants de commerce.

Pour satisfaire son lecteur peu difficile, deux exigences : de la violence et du sexe. Le héros, le Prince Malko, - ectoplasme autrichien et frelaté de James Bond -, est appelé à l'aide par la C.I.A., pour une mission délicate et inepte, sur tel point du globe. Il doit déjouer un complot (celui de terroristes, de jaunes, de mafieux,... de Saddam Hussein, bref, de tous les méchants de la Terre), au péril de sa vie.

La clef de la recette, la variation, tient dans l'exotisme de chaque nouvelle destination, avec son cortège de clichés et de folklore douteux. Le lecteur voyage.

Sur place, premier auxiliaire, le chef d'antenne de la C.I.A., expose la situation et présente à Malko le second auxiliaire, son contact indigène : une superbe jeune femme bien introduite dans la société locale. Le premier bavarde avec le héros toutes les quinze pages et permet au lecteur distrait de s'y retrouver sans forcer dans une enquête prétexte à une intrigue vaseuse. La seconde connaît du monde, ce qui peut toujours servir, et surtout, elle cède assez vite à la libido insubmersible de Malko, auquel elle prodigue bientôt ses faveurs. On en a pour son argent.

En alternance, les méchants, cruels et les méchantes, très garces, égorgent et torturent à qui mieux mieux. Brutaux et obsédés, archétypes à la hache, ils font et incarnent le Mal.

Bref, une combinatoire réglée de scènes d'action sanguinolentes et d'érotisme cru, entrecoupées de pauses pseudo-mondaines - champagne-caviar, finit par se résoudre dans une heureuse fusillade. On liquide et on s'en va.

Reality-show

Gérard de Villiers est donc un auteur efficace, et bien informé. Car il prétend au réalisme. Pour donner des effets de réel, notre artisan se déplace d'un pays à l'*autre pour y concocter* ses basses œuvres, tel Zola amassant les documents naturalistes, tel Stendhal goûtant surtout les petits faits vrais.

C'est alors que cet homme sent le souffre. Quand il arrive en ville, hante les ambassades et recherche les indicateurs, toute la communauté en frissonne, car les personnalités *aussi lui servent. Narcissisme* ou pudeur jouée, on l'approche ou on le fuit, avec la délicieuse inquiétude d'être ou de ne pas être, trois mois plus tard, au cœur du prochain volume. Et trois mois plus tard, ce personnage infréquentable devient le sujet favori des dîners en ville. Les trois S.A.S. qui évoquent la capitale jordanienne - *Massacre à Amman* (1971), *La Résolution 687* (1996) et le tout dernier, *La Peste noire de Bagdad* - se passent sous le manteau et se négocient âprement ; on s'en récite des pages... : qui en est ?

En réalité, Villiers est moins un amateur subtil du roman à *clefs qu'un sous-doué de* l'imagination. Il penche davantage vers le *reality-show* et les procédés de la télévision commerciale. Au point que ses pages sont entrelardées de publicités aussi peu discrètes que ridicules, pour toutes sortes d'articles de bazar pour parvenus : montres, briquets, alcools, mobiliers... (voir encadré). Le *pseudo-roman n'est définitivement* qu'un prétexte, qu'un emballage commercial, et tout le reste n'est que littérature.

L'auteur fait pourtant l'effort d'actualiser ses scenarii et l'on signale à cet égard son passage dans la capitale jordanienne l'hiver dernier. Aussi retrouve-t-on dans *La Peste noire de Bagdad*, des allusions à l'affaire Mecha'al et à d'autres faits marquants des derniers mois. De même, l'ouvrage paru en 1996 nous replonge-t-il dans l'affaire des gendres de Saddam Hussein qui se s'étaient réfugiés l'été précédent à Amman.

A ce réalisme ne contribue pas peu une topographie dont l'évolution, au fil des trois romans, reflète bien l'expansion de l'ancienne Philadelphie. Alors que *Massacre...*, situé au lendemain de Septembre noir, nous emmène sur les pentes de djebel Amman, sur celles de Weibdeh, *Résolution 687* nous transporte vers Shmeisani et *La Peste noire* consacre Abdoun, nouvel épicentre de la vie sociale à Amman. Le lecteur découvrira, ébahi, comment le destin de la région, sinon de la planète a pu se jouer lors d'une projection de *Titanic* au cinéma Galleria.

La mise à jour des fiches n'est pas, il est vrai, une tâche aisée et, vu la cadence de sa production, Gérard de Villiers n'a pas forcément le temps de se *relire. Estimé à 600.000 dans Résolution 687*, le nombre d'Iraqiens présents dans le royaume (donnée au demeurant inconnue) se retrouva amputé de moitié quelques chapitres plus loin.

Bédouins lubriques

Ces imperfections ne sont rien, il est vrai, au regard d'une *stratification* socio-communautaire toute en nuances. Davantage qu'à la mosaïque parfois évoquée, la Jordanie de S.A.S. s'apparente, dans ses trois livraisons, à un simple triptyque. On y rencontre les bédouins, d'abord. Loin d'être loués pour leur rectitude, ceux-ci apparaissent surtout incultes, lubriques, plus âpres au gain qu'au combat. Il y a ensuite les Tcherkesses, tout aussi pervers, mais plus fins. Dans *Résolution 687*, Zahra, qui a *pourtant choisi le bon camp* (celui de la C.I.A., s'entend), incarne ainsi la Circassienne, dont la grand-mère distrayait déjà les *dignitaires de la Sublime Porte.*

Diffamatoire

Mais ce triptyque reste dominé, bien entendu, par les Palestiniens. Unis aux deux autres groupes par le commun dénominateur de la cruauté, ceux-ci s'en distinguent en apparaissant systématiquement dans le «mauvais camp» anti-américain. Seule nuance apportée à ce tableau noir : la brève mention, dans *Massacre à Amman*, d'un général originaire de la rive occidentale parmi les adversaires des fedayins. Hormis cette annotation, pas inexacte mais isolée, *la cause est entendue* : les belles Rarwa et Randa (respectivement à l'œuvre dans *Massacre...* et dans *La Résolution...*) sont aussi dangereuses que leur compagnon d'exode, Basman Abu Sharif, chargé de propager la peste noire.

Pourtant, bien que l'archétype du (très) méchant Palestinien demeure, sa fonction, ses mobiles ont évolué au fil du temps. Le lecteur retrouve, dans les obsessions de Malko et de son créateur, le rôle de la Jordanie tel qu'il est perçu à l'échelle internationale.

Ainsi, enjeu central du Massacre..., le roi Hussein, après avoir été sauvé par S.A.S. d'un complot fomenté par des *fedayins* fanatiques, n'apparaît plus du tout par la suite. Mais c'est comme suppôts d'une nouvelle Cause, encore plus dangereuse, que les Palestiniens se voient désormais attribuer carnages et vilenies en tous genres : celle de l'Iraq. Précisons que, faute de repérages *in situ*, Amman apparaît comme une sorte de Bagdad par procura*tion. Celle de l'Iraq ou celle de* Saddam Hussein ? Villiers ne s'embarrasse pas de telles subtilités. *La Résolution 687* est ainsi faite : le nouvel ordre mondial interdit de s'apitoyer sur le sort des enfants morts des suites de l'embargo... Encore une fois, la leçon de *La Peste noire...*, après *Résolution 687*, est simple : l'Iraq entend non seulement contrer Washington mais aussi intoxiquer Israël et la planète toute entière, en s'appuyant pour cela sur les terroristes ataviques que sont les Palestiniens. Point d'orgue de cette effroyable alliance : le repoussant Basman Abu Sharif, défiguré par une lettre piégée du Mossad. A la solde de Bagdad et du groupe, forcément extrémiste, d'Abu Ibrahim, l'intéressé aurait la particularité de connaître ses plus grandes jouissances sexuelles après *avoir occis ses adversaires* ! Diffamatoire et abject, le portrait l'est d'autant plus qu'il vise une personnalité quasiment homonyme, engagée dans le processus de paix. On aura reconnu l'ancien activiste du Front populaire de libération de la Palestine, Bassam Abu Sharif.

Au total s'esquissent les contours de ce qu'il faut bien appeler une arabophobie. Bien que l'Iraq et les Palestiniens aient droit à un traitement particulier, ce sont les Arabes dans leur ensemble, en effet, qui se trouvent, dans les trois livres, en permanence insultés, abaissés sur le plan moral, culturel... Si, ici et là, quelques chrétiens apparaissent, cette arabophobie s'accompagne aussi, comme chez tant d'ex-*cold warriors*, d'une véritable islamophobie.

Puisse cet article vous en *avoir convaincus : bien davan*tage que ne le font les *James Bond*, c'est une idéologie de Guerre froide, largement colorée de racisme et de machisme, que véhiculent les aventures jordaniennes d'une Altesse fort peu recommandable. ■

H. B. et J.- C. A.

(1) En consultation dans toutes les bonnes bibliothèques.



Une créature de rêve arme au poing : la couverture des S. A. S., qui paraissent en collection de poche, n'a guère varié depuis trente ans. On ne change pas une recette qui marche.

D'Air France à Zippo : le dico de Malko

Air France : la [illegible]

Ange : [illegible]

Claude Dallé : [illegible]

Hôtels : [illegible]

[illegible]

Ressemblance : quand la fiction [illegible] la réalité. Gérard de Villiers aime les voyages [illegible]

[illegible] toute la propriétaire d'un grand restaurant d'Amman sous les traits de la Milanaise Sophia, une proche du roi Hussein qui n'a pas froid aux yeux (*Massacre à...*). [illegible] chef de station de la *C.I.A. à Amman* (*La Résolution 687*). [illegible]

S.A.S. : Son Altesse Sérénissime. Le héros est de la haute. Un Prince avec un château en Autriche, celui de Liezen. Ses amis et ses ennemis l'appellent simplement Malko Linge. Mais l'espion aux yeux d'or peut se targuer d'une liste de titres à faire pâlir d'envie toute la famille [illegible]. Chevalier de Droit de l'Ordre Noir, Chevalier de Malte, Membre de l'Ordre de la Toison d'Or, Chevalier du Saint-Sépulcre.

Sexe : A peu près toutes les 40 ou 50 pages. Rageuses, violentes, toujours vulgaires, les scènes décrites ne brillent guère par leur originalité. Seul constat [illegible] après chaque décharge [illegible].

Taittinger : Indéboulonnable Comtes de Champagne blanc [illegible] qui depuis les débuts de la série enivre hommes et femmes dans un tourbillon de désirs. Le rosé est réservé aux [illegible] d'affaires.

Zippo : Malko ne s'en est jamais séparé. [illegible] ne manquent pas d'impressionner son interlocutrice, à chaque fois qu'il a décidé d'allumer le feu. ■

Yannick Lainé

Capitaine Conan le barbant

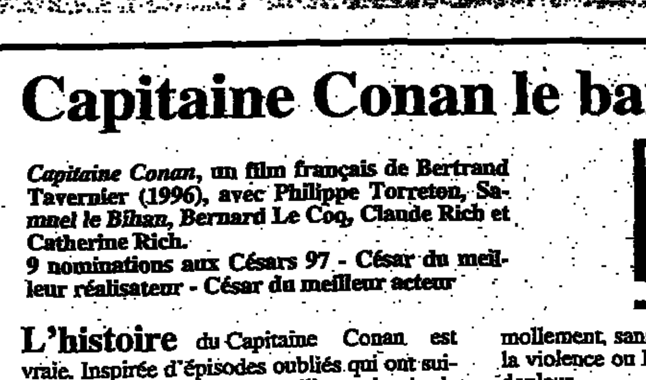
***Capitaine Conan*, un film français de Bertrand Tavernier (1996), avec Philippe Torreton, Samuel le Bihan, Bernard Le Coq, Claude Rich et Catherine Rich.**
9 nominations aux Césars 97 - César du meilleur réalisateur - César du meilleur acteur

L'histoire du Capitaine Conan est vraie. Inspirée d'épisodes oubliés qui ont suivi l'Armistice de 1918, elle illustre la vie de poilus qui ont la guerre aux tripes. L'un d'eux, Capitaine Conan, en a fait une sorte de compagne, dangereuse et exaltante.

Mais le jeu des acteurs n'est pas convaincant. Le héros a des allures de fossile archaïque, plombé par des dialogues peaufinés à l'extrême, alourdi encore par le jeu sans subtilité de Philippe Torreton (avec son accent pécore insupportable) et Samuel Le Bihan (assez fade). Ôtez les discours, autour desquels l'essentiel de la mise en scène s'organise, et il ne reste que quelques malheureuses batailles, filmées sans aucune énergie ni vivacité. On est ici très loin du film-choc. *Il est même étonnant* de voir Tavernier, qui aime tant le cinéma américain, en retenir si peu les leçons, et filmer la guerre aussi mollement, sans jamais parvenir à en saisir la violence ou la sauvagerie, la saleté ou la douleur.

Il faut reconnaître que le cinéaste n'a pas choisi un point de vue facile. Le film raconte la vie d'une nature, d'une grande gueule, voire d'une racaille, mais Tavernier conserve une certaine affection à l'égard de Conan qui devient après guerre un pochtron cirrhotique et est symboliquement condamné à mort. A choisir pourtant, Tavernier serait plutôt du côté du lieutenant Norbert, compréhensif et en même temps rappelé à sa vraie nature (le devoir, la loi et l'ordre) quand les bornes sont dépassées. Un point de vue si mesuré qu'il donne à ce film étriqué un ton conventionnel donc ennuyeux, complètement étanche à la folie supposée de son personnage. ■

Sammy Abbadi



En créant* Capitaine Conan, *Bertrand Tavernier a illustré un angle original et ingrat de la «Der des der». Mais la tentative échoue dans une mise en scène conformiste et le jeu sans conviction des acteurs.

Télévision

Min Amman bisahara, vers la vérité ?

C'est la seule émission politique en direct. Deux fois par semaine, les Jordaniens ont rendez-vous avec leurs responsables pour débattre sans limites. C'est en tout cas ce que prétend le présentateur-vedette.

Franchement (*bisahara*). L'adverbe a de quoi surprendre dans le programme de la première chaîne de télévision jordanienne et de quoi intriguer le téléspectateur, plutôt habitué au défilé d'informations conventionnelles du 20 heures. Mais depuis mai 1998, l'émission semble respecter son intitulé. Samedi et mardi, de 22h30 à minuit, *Min Amman bisahara* familiarise les Jorda-niens avec les débats d'idées, exercice difficile et périlleux mais élément indispensable pour la bonne santé démocratique d'un pays. Comment ? De la manière la plus simple et la plus évidente qui soit : le talk-show. Sur le plateau, des invités, personnalités, responsables spécialistes qui débattent sur un thème d'actualité. Devant leur écran, les téléspectateurs peuvent intervenir au cours de la discussion pour poser des questions ou donner leur avis. *«Cela ne peut que favoriser la diversité des opinions, enrichir les points de vue et aider les gens à comprendre»*, estime l'animateur, Ibrahim Shahzada. L'émission aborde tous les sujets, alternant les angles locaux et internationaux et donne la parole à des invités venus de tous les horizons (universitaires, politiciens, avocats, scientifiques etc...), de toutes les cultures et défendant des opinions différentes. But ultime souvent bien difficile à atteindre : trouver un terrain d'entente afin d'agir ensemble dans un esprit constructif.

Par ailleurs, la participation des téléspectateurs apporte un peu plus de pluralité au débat et surtout beaucoup de piment : on a ainsi vu l'ancien ministre de l'eau tangué, sous les questions vengeresses ou le thème sur le terrorisme mondial chaviré sous l'effet d'interventions concernant plutôt le terrorisme... d'État.



«Il n'y a aucune intervention officielle de notre part ou de celle des responsables de la télé». ***L'animateur du talk-show, Ibrahim Shahzada.***

Le présentateur place son émission dans les seules limites de la Constitution et prétend n'avoir aucun contrôle sur ce que les gens peuvent dire à l'antenne : *«Il n'y a aucune intervention officielle de notre part ou de celle des responsables de la télé»*. Shahzada recevrait donc des coups de fil de Jordanie et d'ailleurs sans savoir ce que va dire le téléspectateur en ligne. Situation étonnante. Comment empêcher, dans ces conditions, un individu mal intentionné de balancer des insanités en direct ? L'animateur, qui travaille à l'antenne avec une oreillette, semble compter sur la sagesse de son public. Comme le précise une fidèle de l'émission, *«même si je sais qu'il n'y a aucun risque, je ne téléphonerai jamais pour dire des insultes»*.

De plus les interventions du public restent limitées : pas plus d'une dizaine en une heure et demi. On est encore loin des forums-foutoirs à l'occidentale avec 20 invités et 500 spectateurs. Ce qui n'est pas plus mal. *«Cette émission joue un rôle de liaison entre les Jordaniens et les dirigeants qui nous paraissent souvent trop distants»*, analyse un téléspectateur. *«Ce qui m'attire le plus, c'est la confrontation directe entre le public et le gouvernement»*, déclare un autre, qui ne rate aucun numéro.

Min Amman bisahara remplirait donc une mission pédagogique auprès d'un public, qui souhaite ne pas être mené en bateau officiel. Lancé au moment où le cabinet Majali, incapable de dialoguer avec le peuple, amorçait son crépuscule, le talk-show venait répondre à une volonté de parler, frustrée depuis plus d'un an.

D'ailleurs, Ibrahim Shahzada s'enorgueillit d'avoir fait progresser la liberté d'expression en favorisant le franc-parler. Et s'il juge impossible d'apprécier le véritable impact de son «heure de vérité», quelques mois à peine après sa création, *Min Amman...* a déjà ses faits d'armes. Le numéro consacré au scandale de l'eau contaminée a été largement suivi et a enfoncé un peu plus un ministre de l'Eau, Munther Haddadin, qui en avait déjà jusqu'au cou.

Dans un premier temps, celui-ci avait refusé de venir s'exprimer sur le plateau, prétextant que le temps n'était pas aux shows télévisés. Puis au paroxysme des agitations, il a finalement accepté et s'est même excusé en direct de ne pas être venu plus tôt. Vaine franchise, le mal était fait. ■

Arine Mango

05.10.1998

The Star Stadium

Edited by Abdul Hamid Addasi

Pan-Arab Games update

AMMAN (Star)—Only one year separates us before Jordan hosts the 9th Pan-Arab Games. From this week onwards, *The Star* will bring you the latest information on how Jordan is preparing for this event.

Aridah becomes the Games Manager



Aridah

Issam Aridah, the general secretary of the Ministry of Youth, was appointed as the Games Manager for the 9th Pan Arab Games, after a meeting headed by HRH Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein in the Ministry of Youth.

Jordanian female karate team heads for Lebanon

Jordan's female karate team has just returned from Yugoslavia this week, where they held a training camp to prepare for the Women Arab Karate Championship, due to be held in Lebanon this week. The team is being finely tuned, with next years Pan Arab Games the main goal.

Jordan suffers defeat by Lebanese Judo Team

The Lebanese Judo teams dominated in most of the categories (except the men's category) during a recent friendly match. The Jordanian women, youth and boy's team all suffered defeats.

In the men's competition, Jordan recorded five victories in all. Rami Dsouki, Tawfeeq Hassan, Mohammed Shqueer, Waleed Saied and Mousa Khalaf were victorious for Jordan.

In the youth category, Lebanon won seven matches to six, in the boys category, Lebanon won five matches to two, whilst in the women's category Lebanon won three matches to two. Ahalam Al Kayali and Hoda Al Sabaa were the triumphant women for Jordan.





Jordan's Womens Judo team (above) and the Lebanese team (one above)

Karam gives Lebanon the Ruman Hill Climb title

By Abdul Hamid Addasi
Special to the Star

LEBANESE RACING driver Nabil Karam, in his Lania Delta, finished first in the international Ruman Hill Climb.

The event saw 48 drivers from Jordan, Lebanon, UAE and Syria participating, and was patronized by HRH Prince Faisal Ben Al Hussein, President of the Motor Racing Federation in Jordan.

Miss Lebanon, Juweel Buhluk, was at the beginning of the race, encouraging the drivers to perform. The three-kilometer race consisted of two initial stages, and a third, final stage for the best 10 drivers.

Karam came away with two titles, the best single time record and the best cumulative time recorded after all three stages.

Karam recorded the fastest time during the second stage, coming home in 1:58:06 minutes. This was after he recorded 1:59:03 minutes in the opening stage, and he finished the third stage in a time of 1:58:76 minutes, giving a cumulative time of 3:56:82 minutes.

In the runner-up position was Micheal Saleh from UAE, in his Toyota Celica GT4, whose best time was 2:01:58, recorded in the second stage. Rogeh Faghali from Lebanon came third.

The Jordanian drivers faced tough competition from all the other Arab drivers, but as always, it was the performance of the cars that prevented the Jordanian drivers from competing for the titles. The best Jordanian result was by Ahmad Dawoud, third last year, who made sixth place this year in his Ford Escort Cosworth.

Maya Al Mufti was the only women participant, and she took 22nd place, after breaking the women's record in the second stage, clocking 2:23:01 minutes.

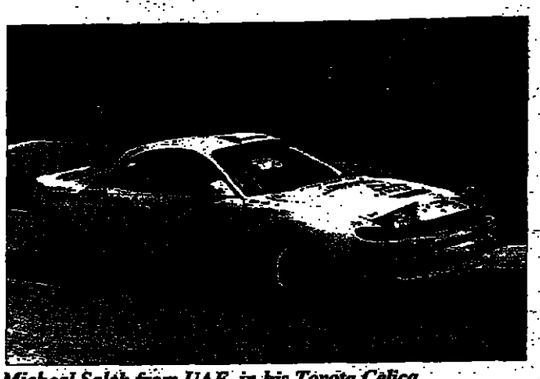
The Ruman Hill Climb is one of the most popular motor race in Jordan, and was first initiated by His Majesty King Hussein in 1956. His Majesty still holds the record for the fastest time set by a Jordanian, which is still the third best ever time recorded, when he raced in 1996 in his Ford Escort, setting a time of 1:57:28 minutes.■



HRH Prince Faisal on stage with the winning drivers



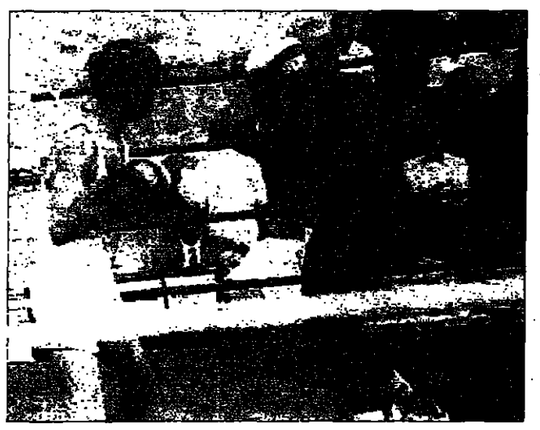
Juweel Buhluk, Miss Lebanon, in her Citroën



Micheal Saleh from UAE in his Toyota Celica

The 4th Youth Boxing Championship in Amman:

Tunisia boxes to victory



Action from one of the bouts, held at the Amphitheater

AMMAN (Star)—Minister of Youth Talal Sataan Al Hassan presented the Tunisian team with the winning trophy at the closing ceremony of the 4th Youth Boxing Championship, held in Amman last week.

The championship took place in the historic setting of the Roman Amphitheater, in downtown Amman, and was witnessed by over 4000 spectators.

Tunisian boxers won five gold medals in the 91Kg, 57Kg, 81Kg and 91Kg+ divisions. Second place was shared between Jordan, Egypt and Syria.

The Jordanian performance was encouraging, as nine boxers reached the finals in their respective divisions. Jordan's gold medals came from Monther Aquilan, who boxed his way to victory over the Algerian Adari Abd Al Raheem in the 51Kg division, and by Fadi Hassan who defeated the Syrian boxer Mohammed Kheir in the 65 Kg division. Jordan also obtained four silver medals (Mohannad Aqilan in the 54Kg division, and Tarek Abdel Lateef in the over 91kg division), and three bronze medals (Homam Hamzeh in the 67Kg division, Ayman Sameeh in 91Kg division, and Ali Ameerah in 75Kg division).

There were seven Arab countries participating in the championship, from Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Syria, Kuwait, Palestine and Jordan.

All the bouts were held at the Roman Amphitheater, attracting thousands of sport spectators, locals and tourists alike. The venue was a great success, and should be repeated for the Pan Arab Games next year.■





(Above) The Jordanian Boxing champions
(Left) Referees using the latest computer technology

Medals Scoreboard and Standings

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze
Tunisia	5	2	2
Egypt	3	0	2
Jordan	2	4	3
Syria	1	3	6
Algeria	1	3	3
Kuwait	0	0	3
Palestine	0	0	1

Late goal by Poyet sinks Real Madrid in Super Cup



A triumphant Captain



Chelsea FC, European Super Cup Winners 1998

MONACO—Uruguay's Gustavo Poyet scored the only goal eight minutes from time as Chelsea upset Real Madrid 1-0 to add the European Super Cup to its Cup Winners' Cup , Friday.

Chelsea, already two games into the English premier league season, made its fitness pay in the end after being dominated throughout the first half by the more accomplished seven-time European Cup winners. Last season, the Cup Winners' Cup holders took the trophy when Barcelona beat Borussia Dortmund over two legs.

Poyet scored from a cross from the left by Italian striker Gianfranco Zola, hitting the ball first time past Real's German goalkeeper, Bodo Illgner.

Chelsea was indebted to a superb performance in the center of defense by France World Cup center-back Franck Lebouef, partnering the unsteady Michael Dubbery, as Real threatened to run away with the trophy in the first half.

Real started with almost the same side that beat Juventus in the European Cup final in Amsterdam in May, whereas Gianluca Vialli's Chelsea are struggling to find there balance with an influx of new signings. Whenever the Real forwards looked like breaking through, Leboeuf was there, attracting the ball like a magnet, to prevent them putting the Spanish side deservedly ahead.

Real's best chance was a free kick in the 33rd minute that hit Dutch goalkeeper Ed de Goey's right-hand post and bounced across his back into play again.

Leboeuf also hit the post nine minutes into the second half with a fine curling right-footed shot from the left, picking up the ball after a Chelsea free kick taken on the right was cleared. But Real, which plays its first league game against promoted Villarreal on Monday, tired badly in the second half. Chelsea, throwing men forward more, turned the tide and ended with the higher rate of shots on target, seven to three.

Marcel Desailly, France's brilliant defender, was played in midfield for the second game in a row. He had a difficult first half but improved after the interval, playing further up as the Real midfield lost some of its shape.

UEFA changed the format from the usual two-legged midseason affair to a single match at a neutral ground to follow the tradition in many European leagues of a domestic season-opener between the champions and cup holders.■

Football roundup



Action from the Lyon versus Monaco match, which ended in a 1-1 draw

English Premier League

Arsenal (0) Charlton Ath. (0)
Promoted Charlton have started their campaign superbly and made the champions work hard, especially after the Arsenal had French World Cup player Emmanuel Petit sent off in the 56th minute for his second bookable offence, an untidy tackle on Shaun Newton. Charlton have yet to concede a goal this season and keeper Sasa Ilic made some superb saves to keep up the record.

Blackburn (1) Leicester (0)
Striker Kevin Gallacher took his chance well in the 12th minute, slotting in a Garry Flitcroft cross to clinch an early winner. The forward was a constant danger during the match.

Coventry (0) West Ham (0)
Despite the scoreline, this was a fast and furious game which entertained the Highfield Road crowd. Swedish goalkeeper Magnus Hedman was outstanding for Coventry.

Everton (0) Tottenham (1)
Les Ferdinand rose at a corner to head home a fifth-minute winner to pick up Tottenham's first points of the season. But Everton put on a great deal of pressure and Spurs' young Norwegian goalkeeper Espen Baardsen made some superb saves.

Liverpool (4) Newcastle (1)
A first-half hat-trick by Liverpool striker Michael Owen made Ruud Gullit's first match in charge of Newcastle United an embarrassing experience. World Cup striker Owen used his blistering pace to expose the hesistant Newcastle defence three times in just over a quarter of an hour with goals in the 17th, 18th and 32nd minutes. The result put Liverpool on top of the table with seven points from their opening three games. Newcastle's fanatical home fans had to watch Czech Patrik Berger complete the first-half goalscoring spree with a fourth goal in injury time before the interval. French World Cup striker Stephane Guivarc'h scored a consolation goal from the home team in the 28th minute, his first for the club.

Middlesbrough(1) Derby(1)
Derby took the lead in the 31st minute when Paulo Wanchope scrambled the ball home. Promoted Middlesbrough snatched an equaliser in the 48th minute from substitute Hamilton Ricard, his first touch of the match.

Sheffield W.(0) Aston V. (1)
After a tight game early on, controversial striker Stan Collymore returned from injury to provide the cross for Julian Joachim's well-taken winner in the 37th minute. The victory put Villa on top of the table.

S'hampton (1) N. Forest(2)
Southampton are still without a point from their opening three games and looking relegation material already. Former England international Steve Stone ran the game for Forest, making Jean-Claude Darcheville's first goal in the 52nd minute and scoring the second in the 68th. Matthew Le Tissier scored a consolation penalty for the Saints in the 89th minute after he was fouled in the area.

Wimbledon (1) Leeds (1)
Michael Hughes saved the home side with a brilliant run and shot from 30 metres in the 72nd minute after Lee Bowyer had put the away side ahead in the 61st minute with another superb effort.

French First Division

AJ Auxerre(1) Bastia (0)
Auxerre's former Strasbourg midfielder Gerald Baticle scored the only goal in the 10th minute. The Corsicans finished with ten men after defender Franck Jurietti was sent off 15 minutes from time for bringing down Steve Marlet as the Auxerre winger was heading for goal.

Montpellier (3) Toulouse (0)
Montpellier's prolific attack took their tally to seven goals in two games after four against Marseille last weekend. Ibrahima Bakayoko hit his second brace in two games, the first a brilliant backheel, the second a diving header from a low cross.

Metz (0) G. Bordeaux (2)
Bordeaux took advantage of Metz's poor form—no goals in four league matches. Sylvain Wiltord has found the net in every match, adding two more to stay at the top of the scorers' list, his second after Metz goalkeeper Lionel Letizi had parried a shot by fellow striker Kaba Diawara.

Paris SG (1) Lorient (2)
Top flight newcomers caused the biggest upset of the season so far, securing their first ever victory in the first division at the Parc des Princes. Marco Simone put PSG ahead with a 10th-minute penalty, but goals from Guinean Ousmane Soumia and playmaker Stephane Pedron, direct from a free kick, turned the match on its head.

Le Havre (0) Marseille (0)
Marseille failed to reproduce some of the form of their second half comeback against Montpellier last weekend when they scored five times in little more than half an hour. But they have yet to concede a goal away.

Nantes (2) Sochaux (0)
Nantes, looking to make up for letting a point slip at Nancy last weekend, scored at the very beginning and end of the match. Sochaux played with 10 men in the second half after defender Bernard Maraval was sent off in the 49th minute.

O. Lyon (1) Monaco (1)
Croatian striker Robert Spehar equalised for Monaco, turning home a shot from midfielder Franck Gava, in a match they were determined not to lose. Monaco fell behind when Lyon captain Alain Caveglia headed his third goal of the season just before the interval.

RC Lens (2) Nancy (1)
Striker Pascal Nouma hit his second brace of goals in two matches after Irish veteran Tony Cascarino had shocked the champions by giving Nancy an early lead. Nouma's second was superb, taking a looped pass from Tony Vairelles and hitting a low cross-shot that went in off the far post.

Rennes(1) Strasbourg(1)
Striker Nicolas Gousse put Rennes in front in the 29th minute, when he scored from the rebound after Burundi's Shabani Nonda hit the post. But Strasbourg denied Rennes a win which would have lifted them to third in the standings when midfielder Olivier Echouafni equalised 10 minutes later with his side's first goal in four matches so far this season.

Portuguese League results
Beira Mar (2) Porto (1)
Sporting Lisbon (2) Chaves (1)
Farense (1) Braga (2)
Maritimo (2) Salgueiros (2)
Academica (1) Campo'rense (5)
E.Amadora (5)Vitoria Setubal(0)
Alverca (0) Boavista (0)
V.Guimaraes (0) Uniao Leiria(0)
Rio Ave (0) Benfica (2)

The Italian Super Cup
Lazio beat Juventus 2-1 on Saturday in the one-leg Super Cup to win the first trophy of the Italian season. The Rome side were forced onto the defensive as Juventus opened in spirited form, but moved onto the attack to grab a 1-0 lead in the 38th minute with a goal by Pavel Nedved, set up by Roberto Mancini.

The second half saw a lacklustre Juventus, but a Lazio in fighting mood, their advantage boosted when Juve striker Filippo Inzaghi was sent off in the 63rd minute. The Turin team, playing at home, equalised in the 87th minute with a penalty from Alessandro Del Piero. But Sergio Conceicao delivered victory to Lazio in extra time when he put the ball away in the 93rd minute.

German Cup (1st Round)
Mannheim (1) B M'gladbach (2)
VfB Lubeck(1) VfB Stuttgart (2)
FC Denzlingen (0) Hamburg (3)
Chemnitzer (1) SC Freiburg (2)
FC Cologne (0) H. Rostock (1)
Leipzig (2) 1860 Munich (4)
Leverkusen A.(1) W.Bremen (2)
Straelen (4) F. Dusseldorf (7)
Lichterfelde (0) Schalke 04 (6)
Osnabruck (0) Nuremberg (2)
Saarbrucken (1) B. Dortmund (3)
(Dortmund won 3-1, penalties)
Karlsruhe (3) VfL Wolfsburg (1)
St. Pauli (0) B. Leverkusen (3)
H. Rostock A. (0) Duisburg (3)
Offenbach (0) Wattenscheid (1)

THE STAR'S **WORK STATION**
COMPUTING & HIGH TECH

Edited by Zeid Nasser

Computer & IT companies !:

Welcome to The Star's Work Station, the absolute source on what's hot and what's not in Jordan's IT market. Contact us at Star-NETS.com.jo or Star1@go.com.jo with your news and views

Mac PowerPC G3 systems challenge fast Pentium II:

'Pentium toasting performance' from G3

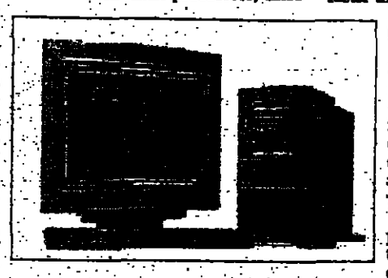
APPLE'S MACINTOSH Systems based on the G3 processor have fared well in both the US ad intrnational markets. This has been due to the power these new systems offer, compared to Pentium systems (Intel-based PCs). Apple is hoping that the G3 line of products continues to be a success and increases Apple's markt share which is on the up since the end of 1997.

The emergence of the PowerPC G3 processor marks the third generation in the development of advanced processor technology. The idea was to deliver a combination of high performance and low cost.

The PowerPC G3 builds on many of the features pioneered by the PowerPC 603 and 604.

The PowerPC G3 is the first processor specifically optimized for the Mac OS. Optimization designs, meaning that it ensures minimal branching and the shortest data transfer routes—resulting in a very efficient processor.

PowerPC G3 processors are produced using the industry-leading 0.25-micron process, which does more than merely boost performance; it also enables the creation of smaller, cooler processors with extremely low power requirements. In essence, it represents a brand-new approach to chip design, one that brings workstation-class performance not only to desktop systems, but even to notebook computers—using the same processor.

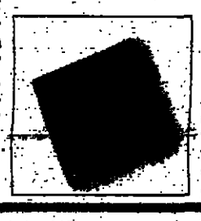


In comparing the G3 processor with Intel processors, there is a need to look beyond the 'announced' megahertz speed.

The performance enhancements of the PowerPC G3 processor significantly reduce the usefulness of clock speed in attempting to compare computer performance.

Apple systems based on this processor consistently outperform systems with higher clock speeds. In fact, they also outperform Pentium II based systems.

For example, a 250-megahertz Macintosh PowerBook G3 is faster than a 266-megahertz Pentium II desktop. Also, a 233-megahertz Power Macintosh G3 is faster than the Power Macintosh 6500 300 and the Power Macintosh 8600 both of which incorporate clock speeds of 300MHz. Based on tests, it has been found that a 266-megahertz Power Macintosh G3 provides performance that is, on average, 30 percent faster than that of a comparable 266-megahertz Pentium II system.



This all means that, in your search or a computer that serves your purpose, it's more important than ever to consider overall product design. Megahertz alone does not tell the whole story.

As the PowerPC G3 processor becomes central to Apple system designs, increasing numbers of Macintosh users will enjoy benefits like significant performance gains, which enhance the power available to handle such resource-intensive tasks as video editing, Internet authoring, and Windows emulation through software.

Macintosh G3 systems are priced aggressively, at around $1500 and are available in a number of guises. There are 266, 300 or 333MHz PowerPC G3 processors, with three DIMM slots that hold up to 768MB of RAM and the ATI RAGE PRO TURBO 2D/3D graphic accelerator.

The new DVD Video and Audio/Video card with MPEG2 hardware decoding is available as a build-to-order option. Combine that with an optional DVD-ROM drive, and you can watch hundreds of DVD movie titles (and continue to play all your CD titles at 20x).

Apple is using the slogan 'Pentium-toasting performance' to market the G3, which is so far Apple's fastest selling computer ever produced.

Being more compact than a Pentium II—less than a third of the size of a Pentium II 400 MHz—and being more efficient and less energy-consuming; Macintosh G3 systms have recieved rave reviews in the computer press.

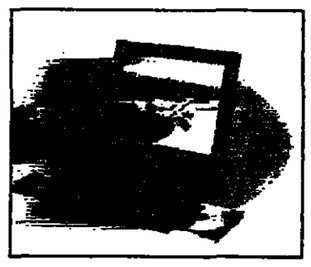
It remain to be seen how these G3 systems develop to meet the growing power of Intel Pentium II designs. ■

A slim, all-in-one 3 spindle notebook :

Acer Extensa 710TE notebook

ACER COMPUTER has introduced a new series of notebooks, the Extensa range, among which a particular model stands out: the Acer Extensa 710TE.

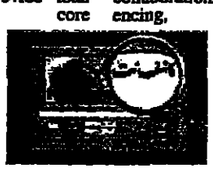
This is an all-in-one notebook with an Intel Pentium II processor running at 233MHz processors, 32MB RAM, a 4GB hard disk and incorporating a 13.3 TFT color LCD screen. As for multimedia, it delivers professional multimedia performance and has advanced manageability for corporate needs. The 710TE comes with a built-in microphone, CD-ROM drive that slides easily into an AcerMedia Bay and stereo speakers.



Utilizing DockMate V technology, the 710TE utilizes an external unit for connectivity to the world. The DockMate can be used for connections to telephones, networks, microphones, speakers, video recorders and much more. The DockMate is truly a comprehensive connectivity box. Most importantly, it is used for swapping information. Through a PC card slot module, the docking unit hooks up to the notebook, and communicates with other computers via a LAN Ethernet module. The Acer Exntensa 710TE comes with a 3 year warranty in the Middle East. For more information, contact Special Systems Co. (SSC) at telephone 5664221 or Tantash Information Systems Group (TISG) at telephone 5691111. ■

Sakhr's latest Arabic Internet software

AS A pioneer in Arabic technologies, with a long established Arabic R&D infrastructure, Sakhr is investing in important Internet/Intranet applications, to provide total solutions for core content intensive technologies, namely, browsing, publishing, search, and directory services.



Sakhr is developing alliances with key international developers, such as Xerox and Digital to provide superior solutions through combining world class language-independent features of international products with all the advanced Sakhr Arabic language capabilities.

Sakhr offers Sindbad, a complete Arabic multilingual Internet client that extends Netscape Communicator to provide full Arabic support for all its client components including Navigator, Messenger, Composer, Collabra, Conference, Calendar and Netcaster.

Users can use it for e-mail messaging, Web publishing, collaboration, chatting, conferencing, time management, group scheduling, and network broadcasting.

NasherNet, another product, is rich in professional bilingual Internet publishing capabilities; features that allow for easy Web publishing. No prior knowledge of HTML is neccessary. NasherNet is a WYSIWYG Internet publisher. It supports Arabic Jawaher Fonts and runs under any version of Windows 95 in any language.

Idrisi, an Arabic search engine on the Internet, merges Sakhr Arabic system engineering with natural language processing NLP technologies. It adds advanced retrieval capabilities to any Arabic or bilingual internet/intranet site, which needs to be exposed and searched publicly.

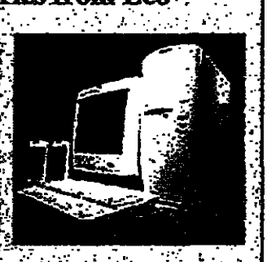
It enables Arabic speakers to search for Arabic text content with the same ease of use as international engines like Yahoo, AltaVista or Infoseek.

Finally, Sakhr product called Al Daliil (The Directory) can be used to find Arabic information on the Web in an organized form. Al Daliil is a professional Arabic directory. This service focuses on Arabic text-based sites. Any Web master can easily submit the URL of his homepage to Al Daliil and his full site will be categorized and searchable on the Net in a matter of days.

It currently works on Windows NT 4.0; on IIS, and utilizes Microsoft SQL Server, to build a database for the Arabic Web sites categorized. ■

New PC series from Leo

LEO SYSTEMS M.E. announces the integration of the Intel® Pentium® II processor 450MHz in its powerful workstation class system, the LEO Persica 3000—a cost effective Basic PC delivering complete core computing performance which will incorporate the Intel® Celeron processor 333 and 366A MHz. For more information on Leo products, contact Royal Arabian Computer Corp (RACC) on telephone 5664343. ■



INTERFACE

BY ZEID NASSER

JD 500 for the PC, JD 500 more for the software:

IPR laws affect PC buyers

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY Rights (IPR) in Jordan are a thorny subject. With parliament recently passing the law a number of reactions provide some interesting angles to this issue.

For those who don't know, IPR laws require that only original music, video and software items are sold in Jordan. This means that a major overhaul has to take place in the thousands of music and video tape shops all over Amman, and in a number of computer shops which sell illegally copied software.

The point of interest at the moment is the user. For years, PC buyers have been accustomed to asking for pre-loaded software on their new PCs. Usually, they ask for the latest version of Windows, a number of Windows applications like Word, Excel, maybe Lotus 1-2-3, and so on. The total value of the licenses that should have been paid by the user may amount to as much as $ 700 for around 10 applications!

Just imagine, with the proper enforcement of IPR laws in Jordan, you will be required to pay that sum, simply because your PC supplier cannot illegally copy this software onto your hard disk. If the supplier does, he may face a massive fine of around JD 2,000 per complaint sent to the Government. Nobody wants to be so vulnerable to legal problems, especially when thet carry such sizable fines.

So, in a country were it is difficult enough for consumers to come up with JD 500 for a computer, they are required to come with more for the software! This should cause a stir among PC users all over the country.

It is important here to note that it is the right of software publishers to receive royalties for every copy in use worldwide. We oppose software theft; but it makes sense to create 'Special Pricing Programs' for students, or under-privileged consumers and everyone else who has the right to use software, but can't afford it. This is a difficult and thorny issue, but we will be discussing it at length over the coming weeks. ■

* * * *

Prices still sliding!

As always, when new price breakthroughs emerge in the Jordanian market, it's worth making note of the latest pricing trends among local suppliers.

The latest development is the pricing of Pentium II 300 systems for around 20% less than there asking price only four months ago! A Pentium II 300 MHz, complete with 32MB RAM and a 3.2 GB hard disk is currently being offered for under JD 600. This is amazing. Add a multimedia kit and a modem, and the whole package should become around JD 770—JD 800. That is still pretty cheap. It is almost around $1,100, which is the typical price in the USA.

Naturally, if a small number of suppliers can provide such a deal, you can rest assured that such prices will be quite common. With the way things are going, any system you buy today will have lost a quarter of its value within a month or two. That is why computer buyers need to understand that buying a computer is not an investment in the literal sense; it is not an asset that maintains value. Buying a computer is all about the long-term benefits of education yourself and your family about computing, which is very much like investing in a college or university education.LEO launches Persica 3000 and 1000

People still approach the purchase of a PC as it were a car or a video recorder or any other asset. Forget all that.

Anyway, the bottom line is as follows: Take a dive, buy a Pentium II, enjoy using it and know that four years from now it will only fetch the price of its monitor, keyboard and maybe its hard disk—a total of around JD 200. However, the benefit, knowledge and possibilities that your computer will open up to you are worth more than the price you will pay today! ■

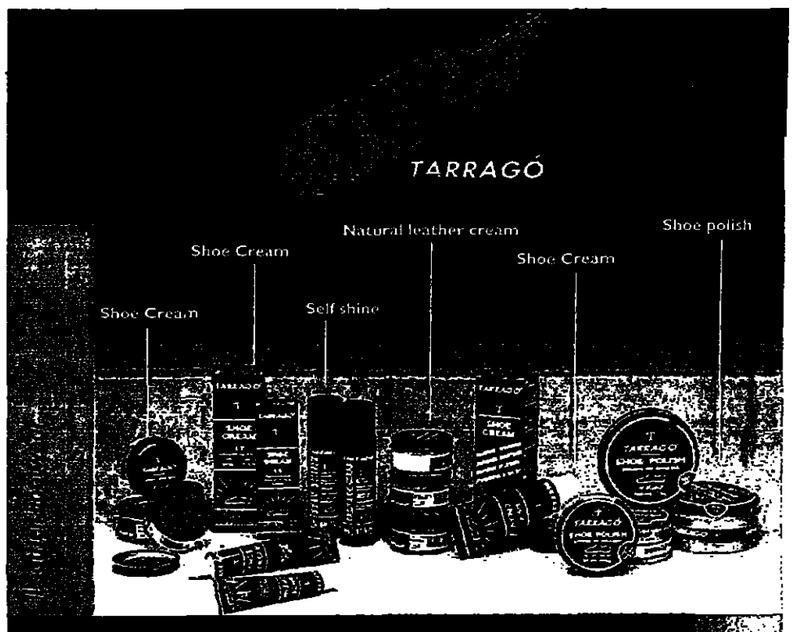
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TRAVEL Utah



● Dancing to the tune of Shakespeare in the US! The Utah Shakespearean Festival is held every summer on the campus of Southern Utah University in Cedar City. The Festival, which started 37 years ago, puts on the most adroit of Shakespeareans plays. "Romeo and Juliet", "A Midsummer Night's Dream", "The Taming of the Shrew", and "King John," are just few of the many that are being performed. In its first two-week season in 1962, three of Shakespeare's plays were staged on a small outdoor stage by an army of volunteers and town residents; 3,276 people attended. Last year, the Utah Shakespearean Festival drew 135,000 play-goers during its 10-week season.

And there are plans to build an Elizabethan village about two city blocks long. The festival has much to offer besides plays. There is literary, music and costume seminars and play orientations. And Shakespeare is a big hit in the United States. Its more famous and older cousin, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, has a longer season (eight months vs. 10 weeks in Utah) and bigger audiences. But the full-house crowds at the July performances attest to the Utah festival's popularity. And the two festivals share many features, among them seminars and backstage tours. Like Ashland, Cedar City's plays, casts and productions are all world-class. Ticket prices are similar too.

Bitten by the Garfield Bug



Mike Drysdale and Gayle Brennan's cat, Gizmo, with his comic strip counterpart.

LA Times photo

By Bob Pool

DUARTE, California—To one group of funny pages fans, the home of Gayle Brennan and Mike Drysdale is the cat's meow.

From the Garfield doormats in front to the Garfield window shades out back, their residence northeast of in Los Angeles is an orange-tinted shrine to the wisecracking comic-strip cat known for his coffee-guzzling, spider-whacking rude attitude.

Their living room is crammed with Garfield figures, Garfield lamps and Garfield posters. A Garfield cartoon video is showing on the television set beneath the Garfield clock. Tables are lined with Garfield radios and Garfield wind-up toys. Garfield throw-rugs are on the floor, beneath the Garfield banners that hang from the ceiling, and the sofa is covered with a Garfield blanket.

"Everything here is a treasure," said Brennan, gesturing at the room with an arm that bears a Garfield tattoo just above her Garfield wristwatch.

"It's a cheery look," agreed Drysdale, gently rotating one of the Garfield mobiles hanging from the ceiling. "It's relaxing. It relieves stress. You get awed-out just looking at it."

Brennan, a fortysomething assistant parts manager for a car dealership, credits her pet kittens for launching her unusual cartoon car collection.

Four years ago she purchased a Garfield kitty bed for them to sleep in. The cats took a liking to it—and so did she. And the next thing she knew, nearly everything she was buying seemed to have the tubby cartoon tabby's image on it.

Soon, a gaudy laminated Garfield purchased at a shop in Las Vegas was hanging on the wall near the front door. A human-size stuffed-silk Garfield was sitting in a wicker chair in the corner. Garfield beer steins and coffee cups were popping up on tables and shelves.

"It just festered and festered. The collection started rolling and didn't stop," said Drysdale, 39, an insurance broker.

These days their bathroom is outfitted with Garfield towels, Garfield toothbrushes, Garfield soaps and Garfield shampoo. Along with Garfield scrub brushes, Garfield bandages and a Garfield toilet seat cover.

In the kitchen—next to the refrigerator covered with Garfield magnets and topped with Garfield lunch boxes—there are Garfield cookbooks, Garfield stirring spoons, Garfield spice jars, several bags of Garfield tortilla chips. Garfield cookie jars, a Garfield paper cup dispenser, a Garfield toothpick holder, Garfield drinking straw dispenser, Garfield gum ball container and Garfield pet food storage jars.

Food is served on Garfield plates set out on Garfield place mats on a dining room table covered with a Garfield tablecloth. Table settings include Garfield bowls and water glasses. Nearby are 100 Garfield coffee mugs hanging from hooks.

Dangling above the dining area are Garfield puppets, along with figures of Garfield comic strip characters Odie and Pooky. Every wall is filled with Garfield pictures, drawings and shadowboxes stuffed with Garfield figures and toys.

Visitors encountering the house for the first time break into wide smiles. After their jaws have dropped, of course.

"You can get a quick read on someone's personality by watching to see how they react," said Drysdale.

"I've had Blue Cross reps freak out when they stopped by here to drop off insurance proposals to me. I have to give an explanation," he said.

Mike Nelson, a bowling alley employee whose insurance is handled by Drysdale, said he left the couple's home in shock after he dropped in.

"You can't begin to explain what they have to other people. I just say if you want a weird experience, go to their house," Nelson said.

Brennan said her brother "thinks I'm a nut" for filling the house with Garfields. "But at least everyone in the family knows what to give me for Christmas and for my birthday."

Brennan and Drysdale prowl yard sales and swap meets on weekends looking for new Garfield items. They look for bargains: They calculate they have spent several thousand dollars on their estimated 3,000 Garfield items.

But they have more things like Garfield bedroom slippers (20 pairs), Garfield clocks (27 wind-up and digital versions), framed Garfield baseball cards (40) and Garfield Christmas tree ornaments (50) than room to display them. So they're thinking about moving to a larger house.

"We've never sold anything. Oh, no," said Brennan. "I've given a few duplicate things to kids in the neighborhood. But this is all for us."

That sort of attitude is appreciated by cartoonist Jim Davis, who created the Garfield strip 20 years ago. His comic strip appears in approximately 2,600 daily newspapers in 111 countries, and Davis licenses Garfield merchandise from his Indiana headquarters.

"To those who would say collecting Garfield stuff is a bad habit, I'd say there are a lot worse habits to have," Davis said.■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Film season mixes prestige offerings with Halloween horrors

These films are appearing on the market this September in Holywood.

"Knock Off": Karate-kicker Jean-Claude Van Damme is back in Asia, this time as a CIA agent whose cover is his work as a sales rep for "V SIX" jeans. Set against the background of the 1997 British handover of Hong Kong to China, this action thriller turns on the Russian Mafia, microbombs and terrorists. Rob Schneider, Lela Rochon, Michael Fitzgerald Wong and Paul Sorvino lend heft to the Brussels muscles under Tsui Hark's direction.

"Simon Birch": Ashley Judd, Oliver Platt, David Strathairn, Joseph Mazzello, Jan Hooks and Ian Michael Smith (in the title role) head the cast of this film extracted from the novel "A Prayer for Owen Meany" by John Irving. Mark Steven Johnson directs this tale of a dwarf Simon, who hits a high foul ball, whose falling arc plummets with tragic consequences.

"Rounders": Matt Damon, best known as a math wizard, deals a new hand as a master card player trying law school. Edward Norton is a longtime friend newly released from prison, Gretchen Mol is Damon's girlfriend, John Malkovich is a fierce Russian card shark, John Turturro acts an old poker mentor and Martin Landau is a "Paper Chase" dean.

"One True Thing": Based on the novel by Anna Quindlen, this weepie tale of a Manhattan journalist who returns home to help her father care for her failing mother stars Meryl Streep, Renee Zellweger and William Hurt as mom, daughter and unhelpful dad. Carl Franklin ("Devil in a Blue Dress") directs a cast that also includes Tom Everett Scott.

"Rush Hour": Jackie Chan zooms through his first American production in 12 years, playing Hong Kong Police Detective Lee, enlisted to find the kidnapped daughter of the Chinese consul in Los Angeles. Chris Tucker is a rogue Los Angeles Police Department detective assigned to keep Lee away from the case. Brett Ratner directs a cast that includes Tzi Ma, Tom Wilkinson and Mark Rolston.

"Permanent Midnight": Ben Stiller, Elizabeth Hurley and Janeane Garofalo head the ensemble for David Veloz's version of the true story of a heroin-addicted television writer, a sort of video-age "Naked Lunch."



"Ronin": John Frankenheimer directs Robert De Niro, Stellan Skarsgard, Jonathan Pryce, Jean Reno and Natasha McElhone in this action-adventure centering on an international team of former intelligence agents, modern-day samurai known as Ronin, who meet with former Cold War warriors as their new high-risk venture begins. Their covert mission impossible: to recover a mysterious briefcase from an unknown employer.

"Urban Legend": Jared Leto, Alicia Witt, Rebecca Gayheart and Joshua Jackson play classmates at New England's Pendleton College, where a bizarre legend haunts the campus. Thirty years ago, it is whispered, a professor of abnormal psychology killed six sudents, then hung himself in Stanley Hall, a grim heritage celebrated each year with an urban legends costume bash. Strange deaths begin to occur in this shocker, directed by Jamie Blanks.

"Shadrach": Based on the story by William Styron and co-adapted and directed by Susanna Styron, this memoir of 1935 focuses on a Styronesque character looking back on what he learned as a boy from a 99-year-old ex-slave named Shadrach. Harvey Keitel and Andie MacDowell play Vernon and Trixie Dabney, parents of seven children and the threadbare descendants of plantation wealth now suffering the hard times of the Depression.

"Without Limits": The second film about Steve Prefontaine, previously scheduled for release earlier this year, will at last get a limited release. Billy Crudup plays "Pre," who held all American records between 2,000 and 10,000 meters before he was killed in an automobile crash in 1975, and Donald Sutherland is his coach and mentor. Tom Cruise and Paula Wagner are the producers.

"A Simple Plan": Bill Paxton, Billy Bob Thornton and Bridget Fonda star and Sam Raimi directs this tale of quiet rural lives of three men and two women disrupted when $4 million in cash is found in a downed airplane. As often happens when large sums are involved, greed, paranoia and distrust rear their hideous Hydra heads.

"Very Bad Things": Jon Favreau is poised to wed Cameron Diaz but his buddies elect to give him one last blast in Las Vegas. Christian Slater (also an executive producer) is a real estate hustler, Daniel Stern and Jeremy Piven are battling brothers and Leland Orser is an introverted mechanic who toss a party complete with a lithe stripper, who winds up dead and must be disposed of. Jeanne Tripplehorn is featured and actor Peter Berg turns writer-director.

"The Mighty": Sharon Stone plays mom to Kieran Culkin in a tale of friendship based on the novel by Rodman Philbrick and directed by Peter Chelsom ("Hear My Song"). Mom and her tiny, brainy son are new in town and move next door to a slow-witted giant played by Elden Henson and his grandparents, acted by Gena Rowlands and Harry Dean Stanton (now there's a likely couple). Gillian Anderson also is featured.■



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